

TO LOVE AND SERVE HIM SUPREMEY ALL MY DAYS:
A RULE OF LIFE IN THE SALVATION ARMY

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Dedicated with love to Zach and Emma Jane who make the journey so sweet and filled
with joy

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ABSTRACT

“To love and serve him supremely all my days” is the first desire in The Salvation Army officer’s covenant. However, with an onslaught of concerns coming from administration, ministry and family, it can be difficult. Officers can lose sight of what is most important—their first love of God and their desire to love him supremely. This thesis-project seeks to administer a Rule of Life within the Salvation Army officers’ ministry that will help them balance and focus their ministries and provide a helpful guide in keeping their mission sure and their lives robust with spiritual fervor and purpose.

CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Prologue

“Has a set aside ‘quiet time’ been a struggle?”

Eight answers from eight Salvation Army officers in their first year of ministry:¹

“It has been a struggle, honestly. I can give a thousand excuses why: my children, tiredness, corps duties, but it is truly the biggest struggle and is my greatest conviction.”

“There are mornings when I wake up and crave it, and really look forward to getting that time in. That's generally when I don't have a whole lot of other work on my mind. When I'm going through a busy season and have a lot on my plate it can seem like a task I am trying to fit in.”

“Recently it has been a struggle because I am not a morning person, so it already takes more effort for me to get it done. Also, we are preparing for the busiest season-and our very first as officers-so I have been rather exhausted lately. The only thing I want to do in the mornings is get a little bit more sleep. Sometimes I give into that temptation which sacrifices that quiet time [and] I realize later in the day that I desperately [needed it].”

“In my heart I know that this time is so much more important than anything else I have going on. But in my head all I can think about is the reports due, programs that need planning, people I haven't called, the list goes on and on. And then I feel like things wouldn't be so overwhelming if I would just spend the time with God. But the cycle keeps going.”

“Everything in me and everything around me balks at the notion of ‘sitting still’, even for the smallest stretch of time. It seems the environment in which we live out our calling is a vacuum; the need will always exceed our abilities, resources, time, emotional well-being, sanity...”

“There have been many times where my devotional time has been a struggle. However, I've realized more and more that without my devotional time, I am absolutely miserable. Whether I remember what was taught to me or not. It is the fact that I am resting in his presence that gets me through whatever I endure.”

“At times it has been a struggle. Especially on the days when there are many items on the ‘checklist’. It never feels like something else that has to ‘get done.’ Instead it's more like

¹ For full Pre-Project Interview Questions and Responses, see Appendix 2.

something that I have failed to do....I guess I am trying to [say] that the time I don't give to devotion really impacts my day.”

“I have tried to find a good time for this and honestly I am failing miserably. I feel convicted every day that I need to make this a priority and set a time that I absolutely will not allow to be interrupted or completely neglected. Since starting officership, to be embarrassingly honest, I have really neglected my personal devotions.”

The Issue

Officers in The Salvation Army, can truthfully say of their devotional time, “Yes, this is an issue,” and it is an important one. Cadets in The Salvation Army Training College undergo two years of intense training for the field of officership. They are guided through subjects of preaching, doctrine, church history, business, advisory board training, statistics, and spiritual formation (just to name a few)—all with the intention that when they get to the field they will have some experience to draw from. And yet their preparation seems to be falling short in one area in particular. Their own spiritual care is falling away as they tackle the enormity of the corps situations they encounter daily on the field. Why is this?

Ordination and Commissioning day in The Salvation Army is a memorable one in the life of an officer. This is the day that after years of preparation and training they are ordained as officers and given their very first appointment. Hundreds of family members, friends, officers from the field and headquarters gather for this annual event in Atlanta, Georgia. Commissioning day is an important one for officers. This is not important only for those being commissioned either; it is also a boost for those with decades of officership under their belts to go back and see new life coming into the Army, to see the ranks reinforced and the zeal of those going out to battle. On the platform in the middle

of this solemn service, one cadet is chosen to recite the Officer's Covenant and it is an incredibly moving couple of minutes as the cadet says these words that lie at the heart of every Salvation Army officer gathered in that room and around the world:

My Covenant

Called by God
to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ as an officer of the Salvation Army

I bind myself to Him in this Solemn Covenant
to love and serve Him supremely all my days,
to live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of my life,
to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable,
and befriend those who have no friends,
to maintain the doctrines and principles of The Salvation Army,
and, by God's grace
to prove myself a worthy officer.²

Officers often get a tear in their eye and their heads nod in agreement at how this covenant daily plays out in their own experience. The Officer's Covenant is a beautiful representative statement of our mission as officers. It is succinct enough to keep our focus pure and steady. We want to love and care for the poor and downtrodden, and we do so through the conduit of The Salvation Army and for the purpose of winning souls to the Kingdom of God, while daily loving and serving God as our primary motivation. However, this last statement, listed first in our covenant, very often takes a back seat against the enormity of what comes our way daily in other pressing matters at hand. We must not let it do so. Here is where our issue takes root, and when this relationship is not maintained, the consequences are often fatal to the ministry of the officer.

² The Salvation Army, "My Covenant," accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.salvationist.org/poverty.nsf>.

It is not the fault of the subject matter taught at the training school. The cadets have opportunities to encounter real life situations and ministry issues while they are there. They receive good teaching and guidance along the way. However, nothing can really prepare them for what happens on day one of their first appointment. They now have employees to lead, a corps church to run with full program schedules, buildings to maintain, social services to provide, an advisory board to incorporate, a budget to make and follow, and their own family to care for. Again, this is using a broad brush stroke. Very often, they are encountering situations and people they have never had experience of with before. It is no wonder that much in that beautiful covenant gets buried in the everyday business of The Salvation Army officer. It feels chaotic at best, impossible at worst. And yet officers are people called and equipped by God, and God specializes in the impossible.

I believe success is rooted in that Officer's Covenant. It begins, continues, and ends with loving and serving him supremely all our days. The motivation behind everything we do should be the loving relationship between God and officer. No more accurate description exists, as we stand in the face of difficult ministry each day, than Matthew 6:33: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."³ Our relationship with Jesus is crucial to addressing "all these things" each day. Only when our priorities are set, and the first priority is his kingdom and his righteousness, can we even begin to take on the things that come our way. Yet we often find officers running very dry in this area.

³ All Bible references are from the NIV, unless otherwise stated.

The Issue of Confession

I think this problem of relationship exists in every denomination, and with every ministry leader at some point in time. In his book, *Confessions of a Pastor*, Craig Groeschel admits to the prevalence of this problem and how it was made manifest in his own life. He says that he stood up to preach one Sunday and realized that he hadn't prayed...all week. He confessed this shortcoming the next Sunday in an unprepared sermon of confession. "That's when it all changed. I became a full-time follower of Christ who happened to be a pastor. No more make-believe. No posing. And no playing games. From that moment on, I would be who I am. Or nothing at all."⁴ He goes on to confess all manner of items that the world doesn't realize the pastor may struggle with: doubt, loneliness, criticism, failure and worry. It was the introduction that caught my attention most of all, and especially the title—"I Had Been Living a Lie." Some truth-telling is happening across our nation with those in spiritual leadership, and it is about time.

Stefan Ulstein noticed this incongruent pattern in pastors and decided to interview some pastors who then spoke openly, perhaps for the first time, about a reality that is much the same as Groeschel experienced. One young pastor, deep in the wave of ministry, suddenly entered a deep depression. When asked, "If you could go back in time, how would you rearrange things to avoid having a breakdown? Could it have been avoided by a different organizational structure?" The young pastor answered, "Maybe. If I'd had some kind of genuine support system to make me slow down, ask questions, avoid giving pat answers to tough questions, maybe it would have been different....I

⁴ Craig Groeschel, *Confessions of a Pastor: Adventures in Dropping the Pose and Getting Real with God* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2006), 11-13.

knew from the lives around me that things weren't as simple as I wanted them to be, so I just worked harder, ran faster and ignored what I didn't want to see. I paid a terrible price when it all caught up with me.”⁵ This pastor realized too late that slowing down and having someone to talk openly with was the secret weapon. Where do we get the idea that hiding out under a fake persona and having a lackluster spiritual life is more desirable than being a real minister who struggles with prioritizing the Divine just like everyone else? I think we are starting to confess this reality and our own health as ministry leaders is reaping the benefits.

When my daughter Emma was around eight years old, we were the corps officers of a large corps with many faithful retired officers. We loved to listen to their battle stories and how they made it through. Emma enjoyed hearing them as well, though we didn't expect that she understood very much of it. One Sunday night after a testimony meeting, Emma began to cry in the car on the way home. I asked her what the problem was. She explained, “I must not be a very good Christian. Everyone that talked tonight said that ‘God told them,’ or that they ‘heard’ God. Mom...God doesn't talk to me!” Her little confession was so heavy on her heart. Can you imagine the relief in that eight year old soul when I told her what they meant? Even at that young age, she felt the need to begin to hide her apparent shortcomings as a Christ-follower. Because she didn't hear God like those saints before her, she began to question her own Christian experience. This confession lightened her heart when she realized that she wasn't alone and that she did hear from God—every time she petitioned him in prayer and read his Word..

⁵ Stefan Ulstein, *Pastors (Off the Record): Straight Talk About Life in the Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 39-40.

Some of us are not as good at confessing yet. When I engage in real discussion with my officer peers, I know from their experience and my own that it is also a struggle. And yet, as much as we have written on officer life and ministry, there remains a deep void of confession. Are we too proud to admit that we don't have it all together 100 percent of the time? Well, let me confess—I don't have it all together all of the time. And I know I'm not the only one. About ten years into my own officership, I realized it, confessed it, and began to correct it, and that has made all the difference. Peers that are “making it” describe similar occurrences. But what if we could help those who are new? What if we admitted it was a problem and began to change the culture of officer life? It is not unique to our Salvation Army, but we do have some unique qualities that make this an issue for almost all of us throughout our officership, and very often at the start of our journey in ministry.

The Issue of Discipleship

Speaking to his officers in 1904, Salvation Army founder, General William Booth, spoke of the Seven Spirits necessary for officers. The first was the Spirit of Divine Life. The spiritual life of a person has unique powers. He states, “It has powers to draw from God the nourishment it requires; it has powers to see or discern spiritual things; it has powers to distinguish holy people; it has powers to love truth, and to hate falsehood; it has powers to suffer and sacrifice for the good of others. It has powers to know, and love, and glorify its Maker.”⁶ Our spiritual life is one that knows, loves and glorifies the

⁶ William Booth, *The Seven Spirits, or What I Teach My Officers* (London: Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1904), 14.

Maker. Booth instills in his officers that it is their responsibility to lead this army responsibly. That it is the character of its officers that shape and move the army itself.

He states:

Officers make the character of the armies they lead. This is true of military armies—Napoleon not only led his army, but made it. This is true of commercial armies. The great financiers and traders mould the business world. The same may be said of political armies. This is equally true, if not more so, of Salvation Armies. On you, then, this responsibility rests. The Field Officer especially fashions the force he controls, chiefly in three ways: by his mind, character, and methods. In short, he constitutes the mould in which those whom he commands will be cast. The shape you give the men and women under your command today will go down to the third, the fourth, and the fifth generations. You are making the kind of Salvationists who will be walking about here five hundred years hence, if the world lasts so long.

If the Officer is a coward, those whom he commands will be cowards. If he is holy, they will be holy. If he is a man of resistless courage and daring, they will be like him. Our responsibility for success or failure is therefore enormous. Where we are successful we are not only gaining victories today, but making the conquerors of the future.⁷

The Army's soldiers and officers, then, are at stake. We must exhibit our lives and lead those that follow by example. But have we failed in this? Are we modeling, first and foremost, a life of the Spirit? As observed, new officers fresh out of training school are struggling with this in particular. It is not that others are not, but part of the answer is addressing where we know the problem exists, and that is in the first years of officership on the field. We can see by the simple responses given at the start of the chapter that new officers are struggling. They know that a relationship built through time with Christ is the most important thing we can do, and they know that it affects their day in their decisions, responsiveness, attitude and motivation. And yet, they don't do it because they cannot fit

⁷ Booth, *The Seven Spirits, or What I Teach My Officers*, 5-6.

it into their already too busy, too chaotic, “too much” lives. Perhaps, we have failed in showing them just how to live such a life.

It is not just an issue for young officers, but is definitely widespread there. At the other end of the spectrum, protection of the spiritual lives of the officers is under the care of the leader – this protection is meant to be a first priority of Army leadership. On Christmas Day, 1911, General William Booth wrote a letter to Brigadier James Melling, who was in a leadership position in The Salvation Army in India. Booth outlined the measures a Salvation Army leader should adopt “in order to make our work the triumph that we all desire.”⁸ This letter was written towards the end of the founder’s life, and the reflection contained therein of the importance of a spiritual life is critical. Booth maintains in this letter that the first priority of leadership is the leader’s own spiritual life. The second essential for leadership is that of training, and the third essential, which I find especially interesting in this line of thought, is the “faithful oversight of the officers whose work and destinies are placed in your hands.”⁹ This oversight includes instruction and discipline, yes, but it also means knowing the officer. I think that translates into a transparent and encouraging relationship between leader and officer. The officer life is not easy, and the founder knew it to be so—especially toward the end of his life. His urging of leaders to instruct and guide young officers with encouragement and by example is not to be overlooked.

At this point it may help to pause and reflect on the specific ministry setting within The Salvation Army, and even more specifically, on the appointments of new officers. Just what are they coming into when they leave that Commissioning stage and

⁸ William Booth, *Essential Measures* (London: Salvation Books, 2009), 2.

⁹ Booth, *Essential Measures*, 5.

enter into their first appointment? What makes The Salvation Army lieutenant's first years so difficult?

The Setting

The Salvation Army has a beautiful history of service and salvation. Many of its unique qualities lie in its history and so a brief account must be given of the beginnings of the organization and then specifically of the officers. To do this, I begin with founders William and Catherine Booth.

The Salvation Army began in London in 1865 with minister William Booth and co-founder Catherine Booth. They felt called to the streets and to people who were poor and downtrodden. Booth's desire was to send converts to already established churches in the city, but soon found that the converts he sent were neither comfortable nor welcomed past the doors of the Victorian English church of the day. These converts were unwashed and dressed poorly, and Booth decided to found a church especially for them, which he called the East London Christian Mission.

Progress was slow but steady. While proofing the Christian Mission's annual report in 1878, Booth's son Bramwell objected to the top line that read, "The Christian Mission is a Volunteer Army." He was not a volunteer, he was a soldier for battle doing God's work. He crossed out "Volunteer" and replaced it with "Salvation." The Salvation Army was born.¹⁰

Today, regular operations of The Salvation Army corps (church and social service centers) are run by commissioned officers. They operate in a variety of different roles in

¹⁰ The Salvation Army International, "History," accessed September 21, 2016, www.salvationarmy.org/ihq/history.

the joint ministry of that original desire of the founder—serving the poor and despised while preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. These officers have made a lifelong commitment in service to God through The Salvation Army alongside lay members called soldiers and volunteers.

Officers are trained at a two year seminary with curriculum ranging from doctrine, social work, administration, preaching, church history, music, and community relations. They also have unique on-site training throughout the two year program. After two years, the cadets are commissioned as lieutenants and are sent to the field of active duty. Throughout their officership, further education and study is required to enhance their officership and ministry.¹¹

For this particular study based on the life of a Salvation Army officer, it is important to answer the question, “What does it mean to be an officer?” What are the requirements, the calling and the commitment necessary to join Booth’s Army of Salvation? Well, there is a manual for that: *The Orders and Regulations for Officers in The Salvation Army* simply describes what must be in the Army officer’s character and spirit in order to confirm the calling on their life for ministry. They must primarily have a spiritual calling and maintain a worthy example of a spiritual walk; they must have mental capabilities and seek to enrich their minds; they must be in good physical health to combat the rigorous every day demands; and they must have personal relationships that maintain mutual trust and affection.¹² The manual goes on to describe in detail what some of those requirements consist of and how they should be lived out. It is helpful for

¹¹ The Salvation Army USA, “Salvation Army Officers,” accessed September 21, 2016, www.salvationarmy.org/usn/whoweare/officers.

¹² The Salvation Army, *The Orders and Regulations for Officers of The Salvation Army* (London: The Salvation Army International Headquarters, 1974).

my purposes here to look at the first requirement, that of a vibrant spiritual life. Booth observed:

It is true that the place and publicity currently accorded to the Salvation Army officer may cause such a vocation to appear very desirable, but the daily wear and tear of the work will soon dispel any such superficial attractiveness. It is also possible to approve the Army's principles and aims, but this by itself will not long sustain an officer in face of the ceaseless demands upon his physical, mental and spiritual strength.

Human need may make its own appeal to the idealist, and he may long to identify himself with the poor and dispossessed. But to maintain such an identification in face of frequent failures and rebuffs calls for more than human goodwill. The grace of God is needed if an officer is to continue to minister to those who may turn his most selfless intentions to their own selfish advantage...it has to be repeated that unless what an officer has to say about the love of God and the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is supported by what he personally experiences, he will inevitable grow weary in well-doing.¹³

It is important that the *Orders and Regulations*, originally prepared by the founder William Booth and revised by the authority of the General, maintain that nothing can replace a spiritual fervor of spiritual life to accompany this calling to Salvation Army officership. It is the primary component in all that we do.

There is much to do in the current field for a Salvation Army officer. The highest ambition is that of preaching the good news of Jesus Christ and serving humanity. This has been the twofold mission of the Army since its earliest days. The Army never wants to lose that focus, for it is this "theology of service" that sets the Army apart in the world. This is our business and the way we carry this mission into the field so efficiently lies primarily on our officers, on this relatively small group of managers for our "business."¹⁴

¹³ The Salvation Army, *The Orders and Regulations for Officers of The Salvation Army*, 12.

¹⁴ Ben Brown and Robert Watson, *The Most Effective Organization in the U.S.: Leadership Secrets of The Salvation Army* (New York: Crown Business, 2001), 2-3.

It can be difficult to become preoccupied with anything other than our first love in these days, when the organization has become so large and so diversified in what it offers, but that is exactly what we are tasked to do: to take our first love and let it permeate all that we do.¹⁵ It is this clarity of mission that officers find the most difficult when tasked with so very much. As an officer takes an appointment on the field, he or she is immediately faced with the challenges of both a church leader and non-profit business manager: i.e., management of employees, church services throughout the week, sermon preparation, maintaining buildings and property, money to raise and a budget to keep. There is never enough money to cover what The Salvation Army is purposed to do in the community where it is, but somehow the officer is challenged to fund it anyway—all while maintaining and upholding the trusted brand of The Salvation Army.¹⁶ When an officer goes home for the night, there are challenges there also. Each spouse of a Salvation Army officer is also an officer. To maintain the ability to move as needed and avoid the stress of conflicting careers, Salvation Army officers' spouses are also Army officers. In marriages, this can contribute to a beautiful teamwork exhibited in ministry...and some challenges too! The children at home will be brought into this lifestyle and raised in this manner. There is a need for balance in the officer's life to maintain such a pace. And it begins and ends in their personal spiritual life.

New Officers

Officers newly commissioned are given the rank of lieutenant and after five years of worthy service, are promoted to captain. These lieutenants come out of the training

¹⁵ Brown and Watson, *The Most Effective Organization in the U.S.*, 7.

¹⁶ Brown and Watson, *The Most Effective Organization in the U.S.*, 17.

school and are immediately picking up in a corps where the previous officer left off. They are not given time to learn and study the place they are sent; instead, they are responsible for the corps and its people from day one. It is a bit intimidating to say the least. In fact, it is extremely overwhelming for an officer who is new.

I would like to recount day one in my own officer experience. We arrived in town and were received by a couple of soldiers (church members) at our new home. Two days later we were on the job and stepped into the chapel of our new corps. Sermon and program prepared, smiles on, baby on hip, and ready to experience our first Sunday morning, I shook my first hand. At least, I thought it was a hand extended in greeting—really it was someone handing me rubber gloves and saying, “There’s an accident in the bathroom you need to take care of.” I still cannot accurately describe what I cleaned up in the bathroom that day, but I’ll just say this...it was not what I wanted my first “ministry opportunity” to be. Fifteen minutes and a bottle of Lysol later, I experienced my first worship meeting with my people. Incredible. After the meeting, several young adults looked at me anxiously. Why? Because it was time to go to my house where I would cook them lunch, which I did that week and every week for the next five years in that appointment. After that first afternoon, though, I didn’t know if I could face the next day, much less the next five years. That day alone I had held the roles of pastor, janitor, nurse, mother, cook, hostess and hazmat official. This was my job and these were my people, and I wouldn’t trade it for the world. It does take an extraordinary amount of spiritual guidance to make this possible, however and this I had to learn along the way.

I have made mistakes, loads of them. Somewhere along the way, though, I’ve done a few things right and have been able to help guide younger officers through some

of that early turmoil. That has been a gift from God to my husband and I, and we don't take it for granted that he has called us in a special way to encourage other officers in the midst of their struggle. We were fortunate (and still are) to have some trusted officer family and friends from whom we could seek assistance and we strive to do our best to do that for others.

Rule of Life

When it really clicked for me was when I started writing down what needed to be accomplished, what I dreamed I could do in my officership and life, and what I wanted my personal mission to be in all that I did. I was encouraged to make each thing that I did come from my own spiritual center and fall in line with what God wanted me to do. It was mind blowing to discover not all that I came up with to accomplish was mine. Some of what needed to be done, God was giving to other people. Some of what I was avoiding he was giving to me. I began to explore spiritual disciplines and incorporated those age old practices into my days. This is when I found the Rule of Life and realized that this is what I had been doing all along over these months of re-prioritization and intention. It was through exploring the saints and spiritual disciplines that I found St Benedict, St Francis, St Clare, and many others speaking about a Rule. So many had the common practice of writing a Rule for their communities. With the intention of instilling balance in the life of the disciple, the Rules were typically written for a community to follow, but over the years had adapted those Rules for the guidance of the individual. The intent is not to be burdensome, but instead to provide space and opportunity for work and prayer,

rest and meditation.¹⁷ An interest in what my own purpose and mission would look like in the context of my officership of The Salvation Army is what prompted my journey into finding my individual Rule of Life.

Leader and Officer Relationship

This process began with a leader of mine telling me to develop some of my gifts because that is what The Salvation Army and God needed from me. I wasn't doing it because I thought these gifts were insignificant, paltry and small. However, they were mine and God needed me to use them for his purpose in my life and in my community. I only wish I had invested in this practice earlier. I thought later about this leader stepping into my life. She spoke into my life at about year seven and I so wished it could have been earlier. I wished I had known the experience of someone helping me identify my purpose in The Salvation Army and for God's Kingdom. I wished I had received guidance from an officer leader that was beneficial and encouraging. Much of what comes from our leaders is helpful and instructive. Some is not. Most of it is not tailored to my particular needs and situation. Most of it does not include my role, my gifting, and my purpose. I am mostly not held accountable for my spiritual growth. This communication is missing in a lot of our leader and officer relationships. I don't fault one side over the other. Our leaders are too busy themselves and they have little to go on in terms of getting to know their officers. Then officers tend to hide, cover, and disguise areas of difficulty from their leadership. There is a tension in this relationship that needs

¹⁷ Carmen Acevedo Butcher, *Man of Blessing: A Life of St. Benedict* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2012), 83-84.

to be mended, because it is an important relationship, and one that the founder instructed us to have with one another. To his leaders William Booth wrote:

[Another essential to the success of your leadership] is faithful oversight of the officers whose work and destinies are placed in your hands. This will include a correct knowledge of your officers...Faithful oversight will include direction as to duty and all that concerns it.

It almost amounts to cruelty to put officers down without careful guidance to the discharge of duties, which priests and bishops, who have spent years of studying and practicing, would stagger at. You must help them in their talking; help them in their praying; help them in their singing; help them in the management of their soldiers; help those who are engaged in office or other work behind the scenes...help them all as far as you can to do their work, and do it well, and you shall share in their reward.¹⁸

This is not a suggestion that leadership learn to know well those officers under their care—it is an essential measure for success. When we stop seeing a competition culture in our Army and start seeing a vulnerable trusting one, we will be positioned for God to make use of our focus.

And so this is what I envision:

Lieutenants...

... in this ministry setting of The Salvation Army

...with a ministry leader invested in helping them navigate their first appointment

...and with an accountability tool based on their own commitments to God

...could flourish sooner and more vibrantly in their ministry!

Could those first five years in an officer's life look different? Could the officer's experience be more passionate, more streamlined for mission, and more deeply rooted in their attachment to the Vine? In a world of more, more, more, and a Salvation Army

¹⁸ Booth, *Essential Measures*, 6-7.

doing the *most* good—can officers be used in an even greater way for God’s own purpose for them?

The Research Question

How can new officers be better equipped to balance their ministry, family, and administrative life with a robust spirituality focused on loving and serving God supremely?

Can it be done? Yes. I have seen it in my peers and colleagues throughout their officership years. I have had the connection point made in my own life when I refocused on what I was really called to do and went to war on what I wasn’t called to do. I know it can happen in the life of an officer. I just wonder if we can help prepare for this to happen sooner and thus prevent the fallout from the initial years of ministry. The burnout that so many experience in these first years is intense, and quite frankly, some do not recover therefrom.

My thesis-project will implement a bridge concept from the Training College to the field. New officers can be taught the importance and procedures of a Rule of Life for their lives, for their individual lives, a Rule that includes their personal needs, their commitments, their family, and their corps ministry.¹⁹ I am suggesting this be done under the guidance of a ministry leader within the first years of officership.

¹⁹ Stephen A. Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way* (Dovers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 14.

Thesis

Officers in the ministry setting of The Salvation Army, who have a ministry leader invested in helping them navigate their first appointment and an accountability tool based on their own commitment to God, will flourish sooner and more vibrantly in their ministries.

We want to follow and serve God every day. We desire to do the most good for his Kingdom and yet it becomes a difficult thing to live out. We need help. We need a guide and a direction that God initiates and that we follow. We need those who have gone before us to shepherd and guide us as well.

When in kindergarten, my daughter Emma had her first open house and this was very exciting for her. She and her class had planned and prepared for the parents to tour her classroom. For weeks before the open house she kept saying, “I’ll show you my teacher, my classroom, my desk, my pencils.” Yes, Emma. Of course, Emma, became our mantra.

The day arrived, and we entered the school as we usually did—with Zach leading the way and Emma and Mommy walking side by side. But Emma wouldn’t hold my hand. She kept fighting her way in front of Zach. It was strange and she was becoming visibly upset.

I asked her what was wrong, and she repeated her instructions from earlier, “I’ll show you my classroom.” And I said, “Yes, that is what you’re doing.” To which Emma replied, or rather, yelled at us “*How can I show you when you won’t let me get in front of you?*” Ahh. There was the problem. For weeks we had been telling Emma that she would lead us, and here we were refusing to follow her leadership.

How often do we say to God, “Lead me,” and then refuse to give up the lead position? I think it is our intention to be led, but we really don’t follow all that well. Many times in our lives, and especially in our spiritual lives, we go forward without a plan at all. I wonder how many times God wants to respond to our lack of following skills to a perfect plan he has for us with that same question as Emma had that day, “How can I show you when you won’t let me get in front of you?”

I believe God will take the lead in our lives as we submit to him. The whole intention of loving and serving him supremely is built on the trust that God will lead us. Where the struggle arises in the first years of officership is from the drastic change of structure and focus. Everything around us begs for our immediate attention. If we aren’t careful, we follow each and every one, and we follow them to the detriment of the only demand that truly matters.

I think those first years and the lifetime to follow could look a lot different with a focus by the new officer and ministry leader on the spiritual formation and balance of ministry necessary to navigate and flourish in an officer’s life.

Expectation

Expectation about what the ministry field is like is exciting. Cadets in training are of course prepared for an imperfect corps and setting in which to minister, but not much can prepare young officers for what they really will encounter. When the dust settles after a few months on the field there are areas of chaos, with families in distress, spiritual lives sparse and dry, and unfocused ministries.

Proposal

What would it look like to equip new officers and their leaders with a Rule of Life shepherding tool? This would be a guide, established by the new officer, to help with the ministry laid out, combined with the experience of mature officers, to help set up a life of balance and focus from the start. Of course it could be adjusted, but what could the start of ministry look like with a foundation that is focused and centered spiritually? Creating a covenant between God and the officer, and being held to accountability through a shepherding system is the bridge that could make a great difference in the first years of ministry. It could make all the difference.

Overview of the Journey

I began this chapter by looking at the problem at hand and its setting. The research question was established and the thesis formed and presented for this project. The chapter now concludes a look at the journey in the chapters ahead.

Chapter 2: Biblical and Theological Foundations

Chapter two will look at what it means to “love God supremely,” and that is to engage in the relationship of spiritual formation. We take in his Word as he speaks to us, and we listen actively and intently. We adhere to a life that is dedicated to his glory and honor, and we participate in community. We enter into that prayer life that takes root and grows our relationship of love. We shape our lives according to practices that God has used in the past, through the record of the Bible and early Christian writers.

Through an understanding of who God is as the Supreme Being worthy of worship, and of who we are as beings created to worship him, we seek to grow our relationship with he who is worthy. Our first priority is Christ-likeness and we follow him in order to deepen our love for and journey to become like him.

Finding meaning through practices of Scripture, prayer and reflection, we find outlets that God uses to grow our formation in Christ-likeness. We seek examples from the Bible and early believers where grace has been issued and received through spiritual formation practices.

Theological foundations for a personal rule of life for Salvation Army officers can be found in the early founders and leaders. Life in balance was important back at our foundation, but we have over time lost focus on the priority of our first love of God.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The literature review will examine books and articles specific to what it means to grow in spiritual formation and in the love of Christ. These will include books centered on the Word of God and how it can form and grow its reader, books on prayer practices and experiences, and books on reflection and growth of the Christian in a love relationship with Christ. The importance of dedicating a regular and meaningful portion of the day for spiritual formation will be explored.

Books on having a personal rule to guide, balance, and direct are important as a basis for the covenant tool that will be administered to officers. Stephen A. Macchia has developed a Rule of Life material based on St. Benedict's community Rule. An individual assessment tool to craft a life of balance and focus brings with it joy and

purpose. Perhaps with a few small alterations based on Salvation Army particulars, new officers could be taught this system of life changing material and craft their own Rule.

In addition, The Salvation Army *Handbook of Doctrine* and resources pertaining to the history and theology of The Salvation Army will be explored, including a letter the founder, William Booth, wrote to the leaders of The Salvation Army outlining the importance of spiritual formation in the officer as well as open communication with them. It is important to draw in those resources that concern leadership and officer development and spiritual formation. It may be very helpful to also explore personal accounts of officers' experiences and lifelong ministries, i.e., where they felt most focused and effective in their ministry and personal formation.

Chapter 4: Project Design

Interviews gathered from officers in their first year show that their (lack) of spiritual formation has affected their balance in ministry. Little to no time is dedicated to spiritual growth daily, with greater push from leadership to check lotus notes, write sermons, increase Sunday School attendance, etc.

The project will seek to give officers an opportunity to access their own spiritual formation and relationship with Christ. The project can help equip them with resources according to their own personal dispositions and desires to grow that relationship. I want to develop touch points within their first years that will help them be consistent in their spiritual formation. We measure a good deal within The Salvation Army system, but we lack accountability here. Our young officers especially need help in developing a spiritual formation plan that will keep their ministry and family life in balance. Using an

experimental format, I will interview sixteen participant officers on their spiritual development and balance in ministry, teach and help them implement the Rule of Life tool, and administer a post interview noting the effects and journey.

Chapter 5: Outcomes

I expect the outcome will be a bit of a culture change for those involved. And what might this culture shift look like? Ultimately, the officers will have a better understanding of themselves and their ministries, families, and personal balance. Establishing their personal Rule of Life, along with their purpose and personal mission could change the face of their lifelong ministries.

I hope to see a secondary outcome of the Rule of Life covenant early in the officers' lives. It could possibly open communication completely within the officer development structure. Currently, we tend to only talk to our leaders when there are problems in the appointment, marriage, etc. If there were a covenant from which we were expected to talk about our first and most supreme love and how we are developing, we would enhance our community and relationships with our officers. If there is a relationship where we are expected to talk about our first and supreme love—what we are first and foremost called to have—we will develop better community and relationships with our officers.

Conclusion

Today as I write these words I am watching the television for each minute's account of Hurricane Matthew. Already, we know damage that has been endured by Haiti

and we eagerly pray for it to steer off to the east and away from Florida. Having lived the majority of my life in Florida I grew up with the dangers of hurricanes. We knew the process of preparation: the steps and plans so many have taken in the days prior to this event to protect their homes, their families, and their livelihoods. These plans include boarding up buildings and in many cases, evacuations. Each situation is evaluated and an action plan is administered for protection from the storm.

I propose an action plan for ministry as an officer in The Salvation Army. We do not know what storms may come or how they will turn in our lives. But we could be more prepared by practicing a life in balance and having our center securely fastened to the Creator and Preserver of our days. Our daily action plan may be different, but with the same motivation: *To Love and Serve Him Supremely All My Days.*

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

My Covenant

Called by God
to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord and Savior
Jesus Christ as an officer of the Salvation Army

I bind myself to Him in this Solemn Covenant
to love and serve Him supremely all my days,
to live to win souls and make their salvation the first purpose of my life,
to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, love the unlovable,
and befriend those who have no friends,
to maintain the doctrines and principles of The Salvation Army,
and, by God's grace
to prove myself a worthy officer.¹

Reflecting again on The Salvation Army Officer's Covenant, I can visualize the times that I have been given the opportunity to help "win souls," to "love the unlovable," and certainly "maintain doctrines and principles" of The Salvation Army. However, one line often overlooked and yet foundational to what I do and who I am is the very first task, "to love and serve [my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ] supremely all my days." To love him and to serve him supremely all my days seems to get lost. Yet, after more than a decade of officership, I can now see that the meaning of my covenant finds its foundation here. However, so many officers like myself begin and dive right into service and principle, and dedicate little of their lives to the formation of their own hearts and lives to Christlikeness. We are far too eager to save the world and miss the daily devotion of our own souls to God.

¹ The Salvation Army, "My Covenant," accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.salvationist.org/poverty.nsf>.

At the very foundation of this devotion there is a relationship. The theological background consists in establishing the members of that relationship: God and humanity. From there, we can evaluate and draw meaning about what it means to love and serve him supremely. It begins with an understanding of who God is and who he created us to be.

The Relationship

God is...One

“We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.”²
(Doctrine 2)

God is the sole Being worthy of worship (Ps 96:4; Matt 4:10). It is an important distinction of Christian faith that there is only One God, and in him is perfection. Since the beginning of time, God has been calling us to worship him and him alone, “you were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other” (Deut 4:35). He is the ultimate Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things. God is a creator—an important distinctive in his commitment to planning and shaping his handiwork. God is a preserver and this shows us his passion for care of that creation. He is also a governor showing a defining purpose for his creation.³

To say God is the only proper object for receiving of our worship is to celebrate his worth—the only being worthy of religious worship. Our worship of him is described throughout the Bible and is important as we implement those practices into our daily act

²The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine* (London: Salvation Books, 2010), xv.

³The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 39.

of worship—loving him supremely. The Salvation Army’s *Handbook of Doctrine* demonstrates some of those practices contained in Scripture:

Two significant terms indicate the principles of Old Testament worship. It is described as ‘bowing down’ (Genesis 24:52; 2 Chronicles 7:3; 29:29), that is recognizing the greatness of God and human unworthiness, and as the service of the servants of God, who acknowledge a privileged relationship with God in joyful obedience (Psalm 89:3, 20). Formal worship in the New Testament is marked by prayer (Acts 1:14; 4:23-26; 12:12; 13:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:11) and praise (Luke 1:47, 68; Acts 2:47; Hebrews 13:15). Paul, writing to the Romans, notes that true worship is found in the whole and self-sacrificial response of the believer to God. (Romans 12:10)⁴

Worship is the human response to the God that is most worthy, and is an important part of our relationship. Interconnection in community continues to be important to God. There’s a crucial reason why this most supreme and perfect Being creates, preserves and governs in reverence to community. And that comes in the revelation of the Trinity.

God is One...in Three

“We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.”⁵(Doctrine 3)

God is in need of no other, and yet he exhibits perfection in community because he is also a community in himself of three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are undivided and equal in power and glory.⁶ In the Trinity there is modeled the perfect community of fellowship. All are affirming of one another. All are equally in possession of power and glory. They are distinct but not divided. Frederick Coutts, the eighth General of The Salvation Army says this about the fellowship of the Trinity:

⁴ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 39.

⁵ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, xv.

⁶ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, xv.

“There is no richer diversity than is manifest by the Trinity, yet no diversity is more completely a unity, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit sharing every act of thought, will and feeling.”⁷

This Trinitarian revelation brings together in the Christian’s understanding of God those concepts that are otherwise hard to reconcile within one Being. The Trinity brings the thought that God is wholly “other” and not understood by man, and reconciles it with the knowledge that he is also the One who is understanding of our feelings and human experiences because of the intensely personal expression of his immanence.⁸ We then have one God self-revealed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Another aspect of the Trinity we recognize as foundational is that of the perfect community exhibited within him. There is no competition or comparison, but perfect balance of unity and sharing.⁹ This makes more and more sense as we begin to recognize our own need for community and reconciliation with each other and our God.

The Trinity displays the ultimate example of the relationship that we are called to have as humanity with God—that of pure and mutual love. Because love is God’s true nature and we cannot love on our own, the Trinity shows God’s relational purpose of love.¹⁰ In our own expression of community in The Salvation Army we acknowledge the

⁷ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 59.

⁸ Simon Chan, *Spiritual Theology: a Systematic Study of the Christian Life* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 41.

⁹ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 51.

¹⁰ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 60.

distinctiveness of the Trinity by our care for the diversity of one another and by maintaining the unity that is the foundation of our faith.¹¹

We are...

“We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by his suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.”¹²(Doctrine 6)

This brings us to an understanding of who we are. We are God’s creation, and are made in the very image of the Trinity itself. Right at the beginning of Creation, God was doing something special. He was creating a world that he loved and placing in it a creation that he saved for last—humanity. Humans have been made in the very image of God our Creator (Gen 1:27). Yet through our first ancestors, Adam and Eve, sin entered the world and because of this very first act of sin, each of us has been born sinful and disobedient (Rom 5:12), and in need of both forgiveness and a Savior.

First the Law was given and sacrifices for sin and disobedience were made. Man was unable to be made righteous and reconciled by the Law, however, because we each needed the sacrifice that would atone for every sin. God in his infinite goodness sent his one and only Son to be the sacrifice, justifying us through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:19-24). The really good news for humanity is this: that though we are born sinful, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we can be reconciled as new creations to God himself. Sin does not hold us and we are able to become part of the Body of Christ and given the ministry to bring others to him for reconciliation as well (2 Cor 5:17-19).

¹¹ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, 66.

¹² The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, xv.

It doesn't end in this reconciliation, but *continues* in relationship. Eugene Peterson describes the Trinitarian relationship as a dance. It is a dance where each skilled dancer is indistinguishable from the other in terms of roles, but is a beautiful expression of perfect community. We are invited to dance too. God enters into our daily lives and we are no longer spectators but participants in the intricate knowing of God.¹³ This is the daily loving of God that is the hope of this journey. How do we participate in the loving dance of right relationship with God Himself? We participate by loving and serving supremely this incredible God, and by becoming the people that we were meant to be.

We are becoming...

*“He leadeth me, He leadeth me! By His own hand He leadeth me; His faithful follower I will be, for by His hand He leadeth me.”*¹⁴—Joseph Henry Gilmore

We are being formed. Do not be mistaken, we are being formed into new people each and every day. Who or what is helping in our formation is a choice.¹⁵ And it is our choice. We can choose the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, or our own selfish desire to take the lead. It is our ultimate decision. Those of us actively engaged in pursuing a relationship with God himself are anxious for him to do the forming. And so we approach this formation with the aim of spiritual progress through avenues such as: the Word of God, prayer, sanctification, Rule of life, and community. We long to be conformed to the example of Christ himself. In doing so, we are set apart from the world in our formation

¹³ Eugene H. Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places: a Conversation in Spiritual Theology* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2008), 45-46.

¹⁴ The Salvation Army, *The Songbook of the Salvation Army* (Alexandria, VA: Salvation Army Supplies, Print. and Pub., 2015), 191.

¹⁵ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2012), 19.

and desire to be like Jesus. Our love is different from the natural course around us, our purity is a far cry from what we see typically being displayed.¹⁶ We, in a word, are different, and delightfully so! We are seeing a different formation as we desire to be made more like him.

And so we are in active pursuit of God. This is the way we love him and maintain a relationship with him. Our Salvation Army Covenant's plea to "love and serve him supremely" is rooted in this relationship with him. And the Bible is full of others doing just that. We see those in active pursuit in Psalm 42:1-2: "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" (Ps 42:1-2). God himself shows us his desire with the story of Hosea, showing that even an adulterous people are still his primary love (Hosea 1-2). We shape our lives in response to God's grace bestowed on us. It was freely given and we spend our existence on earth answering his unfailing love that was granted to us first. It truly is a love story and we are transformed in gratification for this love, and in turn, love God supremely. Throughout the Old and New Testaments, we are given this commandment as the most important...to love God. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut 6:4-5). Jesus, when pressed with the question of what is the most important commandment, responded in the same way, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matt 22:37). God gives us the tremendous choice to love him, and desires our love as a response to his own. Yet, so often we chose the things and people that can never love us so completely.

¹⁶ Samuel Logan Brengle, *The Way of Holiness* (London: Salvation Army Book Dept., 1904), 5.

This can prove to be a difficult daily decision, but one crucial to our being formed into the Christ-like people he desires us to be.

Samuel Logan Brengle, noted theologian for The Salvation Army, explains the growth that is continual to our development. He writes as follows:

When the heart is purified it develops more rapidly than ever before. Spiritual development comes through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the heart, and the holy soul is in a condition to receive such revelations constantly, and since the finite can never exhaust the infinite, these revelations will continue forever and prove an increasing and never-ending source of development.¹⁷

This forming does not stop because we can never outgrow God. We form more and more in the loving likeness of Christ.

The way we can love the Lord and become spiritually formed lovers like Christ is to engage in the relationship of spiritual formation. We take in his Word as he speaks to us and we listen actively and intently. We adhere to a life that is dedicated to his glory and honor, and we participate in community. We enter into that prayer life that is so intimate and understood as two people talking that really comprehend what is being communicated, through words and without them.

My aim as an officer is the same as this exploration: “To love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ supremely all my days.” It begins, takes root and grows through relationship. That relationship, I believe, is cultivated and grown through spiritual formation. It teaches us to love and accept God’s love, and for that love to shape and form our lives in response.

¹⁷ Samuel Logan Brengle and Bramwell Booth, *Heart Talks on Holiness* (London: Salvation Army, 1913), 10.

Biblical and Theological Themes for Salvation Army Officers

To Love and Serve Him Supremely All My Days

I have already begun to explore the foundation of Salvation Army officership found in that opening statement of the officer's covenant. It is upon this relationship with God that life and purpose both grow and flourish. The way to nourish this relationship with God can be found through his grace only, and our efforts merely put us in a posture to receive this unmerited grace. This is how we love and serve him supremely.

This readiness for receiving his grace is what spiritual formation gives us. Why are there certain practices that seem to help more in this endeavor? Why do the elements of Word, prayer, and reflection assist formation so well? The answer is simple as we go where God has revealed himself already. As Dallas Willard explains in *Renovation of the Heart*, we go where God has shown himself to be before. He writes: "Spiritual formation in Christ is an orderly process. Although God can triumph in disorder, that is not his choice. And instead of focusing upon what God *can* do, we must humble ourselves to accept the ways he *has* chosen to work with us. These are clearly laid out in the Bible, and especially in the words and person of Jesus."¹⁸ We can follow where we have seen God work, and it is not that he cannot or will not work outside of these facets, but we can draw from his Word and our history how he wants us to nurture our relationship with him. We can pull these distinctions from the Bible and the practices of our church fathers and mothers. From that support we draw our own necessary conclusion that spiritual formation is both necessary and expected in our relationship with God. Specifically here,

¹⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 10.

I want to explore the instances of the Word, Prayer, Reflection, Sanctification, Rule of Life, and Community found in the Bible, in our church, and in Salvation Army tradition.

Word

“We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.”¹⁹(Doctrine 1)

The Word of God is powerful and gives us a direct encounter with the God of the universe who speaks through it. Chris Webb describes the encounters with Moses as God speaking through a burning bush, through a mountain top experience, and while wandering in the wilderness. Each experience was extraordinary, because each was an opportunity for transformation brought by the Word of God. Webb writes, “Moses was not changed by a text. He was utterly transformed by a direct encounter with God, an experience which was mediated through the words.”²⁰ Moses was not the only one encouraged to listen to God and his direction, to his words. In Proverbs 4 we find constant encouragement to listen to wisdom, and to listen to the teacher’s words. It would seem to not only be a daily requirement, but a constant one when the Scripture says, “Pay attention to what I say; turn your ear to my words. Do not let them out of your sight, keep them within your heart” (Prov 4: 20-21).

These revelations are new every single day. I would never cultivate a friendship or deep relationship by not attending to them. My husband and I rely on our daily communication to know one another’s hearts. The same is true of our relationship with

¹⁹ The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, xv.

²⁰ Chris Webb, *The Fire of the Word: Meeting God on Holy Ground* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 21.

Jesus Christ. He desires to be in constant conversation with us. It is a love that will flow throughout the day in communion with others and in decisions made. It is a love that needs to be daily gathered and used. I think of the manna that the Israelites gathered in the wilderness. They could not stock up and sustain their needs, but needed to gather new manna daily (Exodus 16). In the same way, our God has new manna for us daily to take up and “eat.” Jesus calls himself the very bread of life, which is something that we need daily (John 6:35). It can hardly escape our realization that we need to take up his Word each day to live according to his guidance and care.

Regular and consistent listening to God through His Word finds a beautiful example in John 10. Jesus says, “The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out...his sheep follow him because they know his voice” (10:1-3). We recognize the Shepherd’s voice when we are listening to it over and over again. We will also recognize those that are not the Shepherd and that desire to lead us away from him and his purpose. This knowing only happens in a daily committed relationship with him.

This internalization of the Word of God does not happen when we are not reading it consistently. Eugene Peterson gives us examples in Scripture of those who physically eat the book containing the Word. Ezekiel and Jeremiah eat the very scripture they are given. Perhaps this would be a bit extreme for us, but the sentiment is there. We take in what we spend time with and that extends to every aspect of our daily life. Peterson explains, “Readers become what they read. If Holy Scripture is to be something other

than mere gossip about God, it must be internalized.”²¹ What we read and take in *is* forming us. We must make sure that it is God’s Word speaking into our formation.

Our history shows an incredible reliance on the Word to hear God speak to us, collectively and individually. Before he traveled, preaching and leading others to become Christ followers, St Francis of Assisi was struck by the power of the Word of God. Hearing the Word of God in his own language sparked the Spirit’s leading in his life. Hearing the Gospel message set the course of his life in a new direction, one that would become legendary.²² Chris Webb annotates more followers like St Francis in his work *The Fire of the Word*, citing examples from Antony, the “father of monasticism,” all the way to Martin Luther King Jr, each having an encounter with the Word of God that would change their lives. The Word of God is vital to our lives and is used by the Lord to put us on the right course. It is our way of hearing him.

I have had a personal encounter with daily Scripture that has impacted my life forever. I began writing out the Word of God a couple of years ago. I started in John and I cannot describe the impact of writing the words of Jesus that began to resonate within me and held there daily. Each day I brought to my mind certain words and phrases from the heart and life of Jesus that would hold me. They would resonate in the face of opposition and failure and uphold me in times of trouble. These words that I had written each morning would uplift and encourage not only my heart but also those that I came in contact with. The daily Word of God has the power to change and encourage us to

²¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book: a Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), 20-21.

²² Webb, *The Fire of the Word*, 16.

become more like Christ in our own words and actions. When I feed on his Word daily, I am allowing myself to be open to his grace for change and formation by his Spirit.

As Brengle describes the Scripture, he says to let the one book shape your entire life. In it there is a: recipe book for making holy people, a guide book to show us the way to Heaven, and a medical book to get rid of soul-sickness. The Bible is our very bread and spirit, and it is by it that we live (Matt 4:4; John 6:63). And then he states simply, “read God’s Word.”²³

Prayer

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 4:6-7)

In speaking about relationship and the act of loving the Savior supremely, I come to focus now on prayer. It may not be helpful to separate the Word of God from the prayer of his people because, in a close relationship of love, these flow in and out of one another with the ease of a conversation with intimate friends. The Christian’s life is an ongoing conversation with God. It is a life of prayer. It is the prayer that does not cease or stop. There is no beginning or end because the conversation is ongoing and it is a sweet privilege of the believer. Samuel Logan Brengle, writes of it in *The Way of Holiness*. “Prayer is a puzzle to unbelievers, but a sweet privilege to us. A stranger will hesitate to approach a king, but the king’s child will climb on to the king’s knee, and whisper in the

²³ Samuel Logan Brengle, “Let the One Book Shape Your Life,” in *Samuel Logan Brengle: Heart for God*, ed. Peter Farthing (Sydney South, Australia: Carpenter Media, 2009), 98.

king's ear, and ask all sorts of favours of the king; and get them, too, because he is his child. Now that is the secret of prayer."²⁴

The deeper the intimacy of the relationship, the deeper will be the levels of prayer as well. Simon Chan states, "Just as human relationship grows in greater degrees of love, trust, commitment and so on, relationship with God grows similarly."²⁵ We can agree that there is indeed no deeper intimacy than that of the Shepherd and his sheep that know his voice (John 10:27), or that of the vine flowing through to the branches (John 15:5). This is why we were created for this intimacy. It is a crucial part of loving him supremely, and this is the foundation of the relationship.

This is real love, and not merely a loving *act*. It is an important difference. We maintain a prayer life because we love the One we pray to, and not for show or performance reasons. Dallas Willard makes that important distinction.

It is love itself—not loving behavior, or even the wish or intent to love—that has the power to 'always protect, always trust, always hope, put up with anything, and never quit'. Merely trying to act lovingly will lead to despair and to the defeat of love...but taking love itself—God's kind of love—into the depths of our being through spiritual formation will, by contrast, enable us to act lovingly to an extent that will be surprising even to ourselves.²⁶

Daily (even hourly and constant) prayer will feed the love we have for God and will enable us to grow in his guidance and care, because we believe that he will speak into the conversation as well.

²⁴ Brengle, *The Way of Holiness*, 84.

²⁵ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 127.

²⁶ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 24.

Does he get tired of hearing from us? It would seem that God might grow weary of the constant chatter of his creation. But he doesn't. Not even close. All throughout Scripture we see God desiring the communication of his people. In fact, he draws nearer to those that pray and seek him. "The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth" (Ps 145:18). We see this vital part of the relationship we can have with the Father through the Son Jesus Christ's own example. We often see Jesus withdrawing from crowds to pray (Matt 14:23). He prayed all night before the decision to pick from among his disciples who would be his chosen twelve, his apostles (Luke 6:12). We see Jesus praying for that others be forgiven, even on the cross (Luke 23:32-34). We can see the agony of his prayer conversation with the Father in the Garden, which shows us the seriousness and capability of prayer to enter into the very throne room of God with our petitions (Luke 22:41-44).

So much time in Scripture is spent just telling God's people to pray, to ask, and receive. Even more is that they do not receive simply because they do not ask (Matt 7:7, 21:22; Mark 11:26; John 14:13-14). Far from getting weary of his people talking, the Lord appeals to us that he would like to hear from us more, and even that we should petition more on our own behalf.

Many of our spiritual mothers and fathers have explored the subject of prayer and daily intimacy with God. Some explain the direct correlation between prayer and intimacy. St Teresa of Avila describes this intimacy as a castle, thus the deeper inside the castle one goes in prayer, the more intimate the relationship is with God.²⁷ Here there is the sense of journeying deeper through the act of prayer.

²⁷ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 128.

The example of St. Benedict is also appropriate here. With Benedict, the flowing of the Christ-follower's life was very simple. It consisted of prayer flowing into labor in a natural rhythm, back and forth.²⁸ This movement of prayerful working makes for a constant communion with God. Each act that we perform is then a response to prayerful conversation with God.

There are many forms of prayer that have different temperaments and personalities in mind. Just as our communication is different among different people, so too our prayer life. For some, creativity plays a central role, and others may take an intellectual approach. Each expression of love for God is made in its own way, but communicates none the less. However it is done, communication is vital for a relationship with the Godhead.

Julian of Norwich had much to say on prayer, but a central theme was her insistence that God delights in the prayers of his people. He rejoices when his people pray.²⁹ It is an important realization that God delights in us. "For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory" (Ps 149:4). Prayer is the way that we can draw close to him also. Describing the intimacy that prayer gives our relationship with God is difficult, but there is immense reassurance that the Lord draws near to those who seek him in prayer.

I love the image of this close and personal God. This drawing near in prayer reminds me of the first days of my daughter's life. I was a worried new mother and I almost hated when Emma slept. Don't get me wrong, this didn't last long, and soon I would be craving she would sleep more and more. Not at first, however, because I

²⁸ Chan, *Spiritual Theology*, 131.

²⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Spirituality: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 155-156.

worried when she slept. What if she stopped breathing? What if she needed me and I didn't know? I got in the habit of pulling her to my chest when she slept, close enough to hear every sigh, every breath. I could feel her heartbeat on my chest and her breath on my cheek. I knew when she dreamed those lovely baby dreams that brought her soothing sighs, and I knew when she dreamed the ones that made her body rigid and fidgety. There was nothing that separated us, my baby and I. This is the closeness that the Lord desires with his children. This is the closeness of God, and the nearness that prayer brings us to our Savior. We draw close as the God of the universe pulls us even closer: close enough to know every sigh, every movement, because we are his beloved.

Reflection

“In the love of Jesus there is all I need, while I follow closely where my Lord may lead; By His grace forgiven, in His presence blest, In the love of Jesus, in the love of Jesus is perfect rest.”³⁰—Ivy Mawby

Growing is a result of praying and the intake of God's Word, and yet there is so much more that goes into a relationship of loving God and being loved by him that may include something deeper through the act of reflection. I think that reflection comes out of the relationship that is fed by the Word and by prayer.

It is in the pause, the space, and the reflection that growing really starts to happen. It is having the Word of God that we read this morning move into our day and have its effect on a situation we are confronted with. It is part of the back and forth of this loving relationship. It is going throughout the day knowing that the presence of God is with you.

That baby that I held against my chest grew up quickly. Emma had a rough entrance into the sixth grade. Where we lived, this was the start of the dreaded middle

³⁰ The Salvation Army, *The Song Book of The Salvation Army*, 84.

school years. She struggled, not academically, but emotionally and socially. She recognized her morals were different from those around her and she often expressed the view that she did not feel strong enough most days. One day, with a heavy sigh, I was about to drop her off at school when she did something a little odd. She picked up the hem of her shirt...and smelled it. When I asked what she was doing she said, “When Daddy hugs me goodbye he gets his cologne on me. I smell just like him.” I told her if she asked, she could probably get her Daddy to hug her before he put on his cologne, but she stopped me. “No! That’s what I like. I like to go into the tough parts of my day and if I breathe in deep, I know I will smell Daddy and it’s just like he’s there with me.” She took one more deep breath and got out of the car. I had to pull over and weep for a few moments. Because it is about the presence of the Father, is it not? It is that deep breath of reflection—knowing that his presence goes with us—before we do anything else.

This presence of God shows up throughout Scripture. The presence of God in the reading of his Word and in prayer is evident throughout Scripture, which is full of the presence of God being with us always. This means that we are never without him as believers and followers (Exod 33:14; Ps 145:18; Zeph 3:17; Acts 17:27). I look to Psalm 139, one I learned and have held in my heart since I was a young girl. It is a comfort to know that God remains with us, holding us within his power and protection. “You hem me in behind and before and you lay your hand upon me” (139:5). He holds us, behind and before, within his presence. Practicing the *knowledge* of his presence is to reflect on the meaning of each moment and each word throughout our day.

There can be no doubt that when God speaks to humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, he reminds us that he is with us. The very last words on earth of Jesus are to

remind us that he goes with us “to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20b). Even the very Trinity is an example of community and shows us the true context of our own spiritual growth, and it is in the midst of others. And so practicing the reflection on his presence is part of the growth in our relationship with him.

Many early writings from our Christian fathers and mothers contain this reflection on God’s presence. I really love the thoughts on this from fourteenth century writer John of Ruysbroeck who describes this presence as one of three comings of Christ. Mark Harris explains:

“The first coming He became man, for man’s sake, out of love.” Ruysbroeck’s third coming of Jesus is what we refer to as the second coming. But for followers of Jesus who live in between these two comings, our most appropriate focus is neither Ruysbroeck’s first or third coming of Jesus. We need to look for his second coming. What is his second coming? “The second coming takes place daily, often and many times, in every loving heart, with new graces and with new gifts, as each is able to receive them.” The pressing question for the Christian must be, how did Jesus come into my life, my world today?³¹

This undercurrent of reflection that happens in a relationship with God is a continual prayer. It is a reassurance of his presence that goes with us. It is the Spirit that moves within the relationship of love between the Creator and his beloved.

³¹John of Ruysbroeck, “The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage,” in *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey: Discovering the Disciplines of the Saints* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1999), 35.

Sanctification

“We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³²
(*Doctrine 10*)

There is an expectation from God for the holiness of his people. We find evidence throughout Scripture of this: “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified...For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (1 Thess 4:3, 7). The Bible also helps remind us of how this happens only through the perfect sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ who cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). In sanctification we find the daily striving to rid our lives of evil and sin, replacing them with the perfect love of Christ. Brengle uses the example of two elements, oil and water, that cannot mix together. “The Bible also tells us that it is ‘perfect love,’ which must, in the very nature of the case, expel from the heart all hatred and every evil temper contrary to love, just as you must first empty a cup of all oil that may be in it before you can fill it with water.”³³ He also describes the “perfection” in holiness that is experienced—speaking of perfection as obedience in the heart of sinful humanity, and not of absolute perfection, attributed only to God.³⁴ The sanctification of the disciple of Christ involves a daily surrender of self to pursue holiness.

Sanctification was important to the theology of the founder of The Salvation Army, William Booth. Personal sanctification through faith was paramount in the life of the believer. Later in his life he also promoted for The Salvation Army a “corporate

³² The Salvation Army, *Handbook of Doctrine*, xvi.

³³ Brengle, *Helps to Holiness*, 2.

³⁴ Brengle, *Helps to Holiness*, 2.

sanctification,” believing that The Salvation Army was by divine design and that it stood ready for a “baptism of fire,” or sanctification, as an institution. Then, as a community of sanctified individuals they would better take the world for Jesus.³⁵ The Salvation Army was tasked by its founder to go into the dirtiest, vilest places and help clean them out for Jesus. Booth wrote, “If you are a holy man or woman you will help forward the War and spread the glory of Christ’s Name far more effectively than you will if you are not fully saved. Holy people are the great need of the world. I am sure they are one of the great wants of the Army.”³⁶ Living out the holy sanctified life need not be difficult to understand and implement. I have found it beautifully expressed and thoughtfully communicated through a Rule of Life. It is a very common-sense oriented feature in a Christian disciple’s spiritual, mental, emotional and physical journey.

Rule of Life

“Get your time systematized. Don’t let it fritter away. Hold yourself to a program as far as possible, and you will find yourself ‘growing in favour with God and with man’ (Luke 2:52). Plan your work early in the day and then work your plan.”³⁷—Samuel Logan Brengle

Stephen Macchia’s modern approach to implementing a Rule of Life begins with scripture that perfectly describes the purpose of doing such a thing with one’s daily life.³⁸ “Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-

³⁵ Roger J. Green, *War on Two Fronts: the Redemptive Theology of William Booth* (Atlanta, GA: Salvation Army Supplies, 1989), 59-60.

³⁶ Green, *The War on Two Fronts*, 60.

³⁷ Samuel Logan Brengle, “Letter to a Young Officer,” in *Samuel Logan Brengle: Heart for God*, ed. Peter Farthing (Sydney South, Australia: Carpenter Media), 143.

³⁸ Stephen A. Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 13.

around life—and place it before God as an offering...Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it...God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you”(Rom 12:1-2, *The Message*). This means recognizing that on the path of discipleship it is helpful to follow a guide map, a Rule, and thus travel in the right direction.

As introduced in chapter one, a Rule was typically made for a monastery or convent, used for community guidance and procedure. There would have been plans and guidelines for the community to follow and these were different from one another in emphasis. For instance, St Benedict did not want his monks to concentrate so much on asceticism as on how to “eat sensibly, pray and sleep regularly, engage in physical work about six hours a day, have set times for meditative reading, and even enjoy a summer siesta, if needed.”³⁹ St Clare strove to write her own Rule that emphasized the practice of extreme poverty, because that was what was the most important to her and her lifelong commitment.⁴⁰ What I want to make the guiding factor in this thesis-project is a Rule of Life for the individual. It is not to lead a community, but rather the individual (who lives it out in community), letting God speak into a covenant with person. A Rule of Life is a common-sense guide to the individual’s life, seeking what God would have one be and do, and then being and doing it! Just because it is simple does not make it easy. It takes self-discipline and self-care to take only what God has for us daily, rather than every care and concern that may come our way. Often with a lack of plan, the day’s chaos will overwhelm the disciple and, more specifically here, the Salvation Army officer.

³⁹ Butcher, *Man of Blessing*, 86.

⁴⁰ St Francis et al., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, trans. Regis J. Armstrong (Bangalore, India: Franciscan Institute of Spirituality India, 1992), 209.

Overwhelmed, overburdened and weariness are often the results of such a life. And our Salvation Army history is filled with encouragement to plan and proceed with our days rather than chase after them. “Have a good long time alone with God each day, and have your colleague do the same. If you cannot take one long time, break it up. Take time to be holy, and give God time to talk to you, mould you, teach you.”⁴¹ Each of us will follow some type of Rule each day, whether or not it is written down and divinely inspired. “All of us have an unwritten personal rule of life that we are following, some with great clarity, others unknowingly....Isn’t it time to give up our unwritten rule and prayerfully write one that more closely matches the heartbeat of God?”⁴²

Since we look to Jesus as the Author and Perfector of our faith, we can look to his example for us on this earth. He drew away often to pray (Matt 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 22:41). He stopped to eat and fellowship with his disciples and followers, with friends and with sinners (Mark 2:15; Luke 7: 36-50; 10: 25-42; 14:7-24; 22: 14-23). He made space on his journey to heal and teach (Mark 1:21-27; Matt 9:35). We too, can craft our Rule of Life with his guidance and care for who he has created us to be.

Macchia makes an interesting point when thinking about a Rule of Life for community. He uses the story of Ruth to illustrate God’s purposes being fulfilled through the community of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. They followed God, listened to his leading, and he was able to use them for his ultimate purpose.⁴³ That is an important statement about the theology of having a Rule for communities that we may be a part of. It has been exciting in The Salvation Army, because our current General Andre Cox has made a

⁴¹ Brengle, “Letter to a Young Officer”, 143.

⁴² Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 14.

⁴³ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 95.

worldwide Rule of Life for our community to implement locally, emphasizing accountability. He writes, “A strong, vibrant accountability movement in The Salvation Army goes hand in hand with a deep experience of spiritual and missional renewal. You cannot have one without the other.”⁴⁴ We do not establish an individual Rule of Life to live apart from the world we are in, and even the monastics lived it out in community! And it is that importance of community to which I now turn.

Community

*“Come, join our Army, to battle we go, Jesus will help us to conquer the foe; Fighting for right and opposing the wrong, The Salvation Army is marching along.”*⁴⁵—William James Pearson

There is something to be said about the makeup of The Salvation Army and it is right there in our title. We are an army—a built-in community, an Army whose Captain is Christ and that wages war on sin and depravity each day. And yet it becomes so easy to stray from community and to claim in weariness and tiredness that we are fighting alone, or to silo our mission from that of The Salvation Army’s universal message.

This is not God’s intention for our life. We are not meant to be alone. We are meant to do life together in community, and it isn’t always easy. But here is where God stretches us once again and how we grow in our relationship with him, by growing with others in community. God’s intention for us is in relationship. He gave Adam a helper in Eve. He became human himself and communicated a friendship love with all people.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Andre Cox, *Journey of Renewal: The Accountability Movement of The Salvation Army* (London: Salvation Books, 2016), 40.

⁴⁵ The Salvation Army, *The Song Book of The Salvation Army*, 84.

⁴⁶ Alice Fryling, *Seeking God Together: An Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 13-14.

We see many examples of living and loving God within community throughout the Bible. As I begin to narrow in on the leadership of a church, it is important also to see the people who surround the leaders and help guide them on the journey. We are very often introduced to an individual in the Bible and are then shown who is accompanying him or her on the journey. Moses had Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua (Exodus 4-12). David had Jonathan and then Nathan to help him on his spiritual journey (1 Samuel 18; 2 Samuel 12). Jesus chose twelve and then an even closer set of three to journey with (Luke 6: 12-16; Mark 5:37; 9:2; Matthew 26:37). The example is set for us that we must journey together in community.

Dallas Willard in *Renovation of the Heart* reminds us that spiritual transformation is very necessarily social. We cannot have an individual relationship with God without it changing our relationship to everyone around us in our community. My “relationships must be transformed if I am to be transformed.”⁴⁷ We recognize that the relationship with God spills out in our relationship with others and we need others for our own spiritual formation. We are commanded to love others with the same love that Christ displays for us. It is the kind that would lay down our very lives for the sake of our “brother” (1 John 3:16).

This friendship that welcomes Christ in its center is not only known in Scripture, but is made known to us through early tradition as well. Mark Harris in *Companions for your Spiritual Journey* presents Aelred of Rievaulx from twelfth century Scotland. He celebrated spiritual friendships his whole life, and said at the beginning of his written

⁴⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 182.

work, “Here we are, you and I, and I hope a third, Christ, is in our midst.”⁴⁸ Here is the point of the matter: bringing others along in our spiritual walk is not only helpful but essential in really fulfilling the act of loving God supremely by loving others along the journey.

Conclusion

To love and serve him supremely all my days has to involve the spiritual formation of the officer. The Word, prayer, reflection, sanctification, Rule of life, and community are daily engaged by God to form the officer’s life of love and service. We see these elements throughout the Word and theological traditions because they work. God has revealed himself to his people as they bring themselves into intimate relationship with him. Now, with the biblical and theological framework set, I turn to additional literary sources to guide this study.

⁴⁸ Harris, *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey*, 87-89.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

When our daughter Emma was a toddler I loved to watch her run because it was hilarious. There is something about that age that makes children so funny to watch. Their heads are so big and their little legs cannot offset the balance and so they wobble around to find the sweet spot—or they topple over. Why do I mention this here? Because as cute as it is to watch in toddlers who are learning their way around the world, it is not so funny when those finding their way into full time ministry in the world struggle so much. Much like that toddler striving to find the sweet spot of balance, they may be running before they realize they haven't found it, and the results are much the same—they topple over. They become discouraged and hurt, burned out and bruised. The ministry balance is so off-kilter in many cases that it seems cruel to watch them sacrifice their spiritual life or family relationships in the face of ministry responsibilities.

The lack of balance in ministry is not a new problem. There has been much research on the topic in the church and many have written on the subject of a life in balance. I want to lean into many of those works to explore what has been discovered about that rhythm that is so needed in the life of the church pastor and even more specifically, in the life of a Salvation Army officer. Since this thesis-project also seeks to implement a Rule of Life tool, this chapter will consult those that have previously written a Rule for their monasteries, ministries or individual lives. For this purpose I have searched for that which is helpful in ancient writings, such as those of St Francis and St

Benedict, and also the more modern take of Stephen Macchia for an individual everyday Rule of Life. Finally, this chapter will focus in on those who are writing for my particular community of concern—officers within The Salvation Army. Those who wear the red epaulets, officers in The Salvation Army, have particular concerns and life rhythms that they need in order to love and serve God supremely each day. I want to look at the very early intentions for ministry balance of our founder William Booth, as well as how this really plays out in our modern Army. My focus topics for this literature review are rhythms in ministry life, rules applied in individuals and communities, and the struggles and successes within my own community—officers in The Salvation Army.

Rhythm

I recently searched Google using the term “Facebook brag” and the results were in the 10 million zone. As social media users, we tend to brag about how well our kids are doing, how beautiful was the meal our significant other created for us, and how busy our day is—where we accomplished everything, of course! The Facebook brag is real for pastors and Salvation Army officers too. To be honest, such bragging is not just on social media. We love to “brag” about how busy we are, how much we are accomplishing, how much good we are doing. “Well, I’m staying busy” seems to be the top answer to the simple question, “How are you?” I think our emphasis on doing more and more and more is not a healthy one.¹ It becomes the rhythm we subscribe to—how can I fit more into my day?—instead of the more honest approach of knowing that we can’t do it all, but striving

¹ Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul by Restoring Sabbath* (Nashville, TN: W Pub. Group, 2006), 1.

to sanctify the time we are given for reasonable service. It just does not sound as exciting. Yet are we so busy that we become unusable by the One that we seek most to serve?

Busyness in Acts of Service

The chief rival of living a life where God reigns supremely and calls into order the facets of our ministry is that of what we do “for him.” Acts of service for God can cause extreme busyness and fatigue when the motivation is on the “doing” for God rather than the “being” in him and serving him as he leads. Howard Baker suggests that when we get the inner life right, the outer service might look similar. Yet the inner motivation is completely different: it is a recognition of what God is doing and how he is leading us to be a part of it all.² So many of us are too busy and too engrossed in acts of service that we completely miss it, and in the ministry, this is encouraged! Demarest cites one example where a pastor told a young college student to “burn out for Jesus.”³ I admit, I have heard this expression more than once in my own walk. It is dangerous and unholy. Demarest goes on to describe the approach of Jesus in such a situation with Martha. He says, “The Lord appreciated Martha’s desire to get the arrangements just right. But He knew that her busywork distracted her heart from kingdom values.”⁴

“This busyness, a treadmill I have created for myself, is no longer a function of the number of tasks I have to accomplish, but a state of mind and a habit of the heart. Work has become the only acceptable addiction in our culture, especially if the work

² Howard Baker, *Soul Keeping: Ancient Paths of Spiritual Direction* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1998), 66.

³ Bruce A. Demarest, *Soul Guide: Following Jesus as Spiritual Director* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2003), 91.

⁴ Demarest, *Soul Guide*, 93.

happens to be for God.”⁵ Pastors are some of the worst culprits of this busyness, and “too much” lifestyle. Eugene Peterson maintains that pastors are too busy for two reasons: they are vain or they are lazy. They are vain because they want to seem important and significant in the eyes of others. Or they are lazy because they let others decide what will be on their schedule instead of actively making those decisions themselves.⁶

This is not the model that Christ gave us. Jesus himself was frustratingly slow. Those who were waiting on Jesus to perform, be hurried, and stressed out would never see it! His pace is set as an example to us and stands at the polar opposite of our own hurried lives.⁷ This unholy hurry is prevalent in the church, and it is crowding out our ability to hear and respond to God.⁸ We engage in so many ministry activities that we lessen our ability to engage in love and relationship with Christ. This is not what he modeled for us at all. He spent significant time drawing away from the crowds and engaging in fellowship with the Father.⁹

Sabbath and Rest

Much of the slowing that has to be practiced in this fast-paced world can be expressed in the discipline of Sabbath keeping. In describing Sabbath, Buchanan maintains that it is both a day observed and an attitude. It is time spent with specific

⁵ Baker, *Soul Keeping*, 123.

⁶ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1989), 18.

⁷ Alan Fadling, *An Unhurried Life: Following Jesus Rhythms of Work and Rest* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 9.

⁸ Fadling, *An Unhurried Life*, 49.

⁹ Fadling, *An Unhurried Life*, 95.

purpose as well as an inclination of the heart.¹⁰ I especially appreciate Buchanan's exposition of the Sabbath as a gift. It is not something we earn when our to-do list is complete, or a bonus for work well done. It is merely a gift that we are expected to accept.¹¹ And, in another manner, if we live our whole life as gift (of gluttony, entitlement or indulgence) then the Sabbath ceases to be one.¹²

Sabbath rest among the mystics was built into their convent rule for the most part. I love the real and raw way that St Therese of Lisieux used some of her prayer time in rest and sleep. I often find those quiet moments lead me right in the same direction. She accepted this with grace, "Well, I am not desolate. I remember that little children are as pleasing to their parents when they are asleep as well as when they are awake; I remember, too, that when they perform operations, doctors put their patients to sleep."¹³ Understanding this, I know that God can and does some of his best work on my heart when I am resting in him, and sometimes when I am asleep altogether!

Buchanan goes into an understanding of our work, and says that it is necessary to understand the meaning of real work before we can understand the meaning of real rest. God is interested in our good work, and if he has called us to do it, we must do it well.¹⁴ It is important for those of us in Salvation Army officership to understand this. Devotional time brings meaning to our work, especially when that work is full-time ministry. Gary Thomas says, "In a healthy Christian life, prayer and ministry go hand in

¹⁰ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 5.

¹¹ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 93.

¹² Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 163.

¹³ Carol Flinders, *Enduring Grace: Living Portraits of Seven Women Mystics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 206.

¹⁴ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 18-23.

hand. As we build intimacy with God in prayer, he communicates his love for us, but he also gives us our marching orders.” Our ministry cannot cut the need for our personal devotion time. Thomas calls the results of that “disastrous.”¹⁵

There is a balance in work and prayer, which is what St Benedict supposed was the real aim of his Rule for monasteries. And an unbalanced life could go in either direction. Benedict did not want his brothers only praying and in ascetic practices. He wanted them to balance all of life, to eat and sleep sensibly, engage in work and relaxing activity.¹⁶

Soul Care

An important aspect of our own spiritual formation and that of our reflective spirituality is that it has a path and a pattern. Baker says this happens to be the only area of life that we balk at having a path.¹⁷ But why wouldn’t we have a plan and pattern for our spiritual formation? It is certainly more important than many things we do make time for or follow a path of direction in. Just like the realization that we are being formed—whether by spiritual guidance or otherwise—it is important to also confirm that we are being directed. Alice Fryling admits that she was directed before by others’ expectations of her.¹⁸ I am sure many of us could say the same, I know I can! We can stop and realize that our direction can be led by the Holy Spirit when we acknowledge and follow his guidance as a gift of spiritual direction.

¹⁵ Gary L. Thomas, *Sacred Pathways* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 34.

¹⁶ Butcher, *Man of Blessing*, 84-86.

¹⁷ Baker, *Soul Keeping*, 17.

¹⁸ Alice Fryling, *Seeking God Together: an Introduction to Group Spiritual Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 14.

We shouldn't ignore our souls, either. So much of our self-obsession has nothing to do with what is actually happening inside and this is exactly what must be heeded and not ignored. These needs have to be identified and dealt with in order to grow spiritually stronger.¹⁹ Baker goes on to describe these inner hungers as healthy, even if the way that we "feed" them is not.²⁰ Perhaps this shouldn't be a lonely affair. Fryling suggests spiritual direction in small groups as well as friend to friend. Though our soul is private, friends can help us listen to our soul.²¹

I have found along my own journey that talk and guidance is often not even expected in our soul care, but it ought to be. Psalm 142:4 states plainly a familiar cry, "No one cares for my soul." Baker brings this to light in our community. He says, "This cry is felt, if not heard, throughout the Christian community, as one study of congregational life demonstrates: There is no place in their structure and rhythm where a serious discussion concerning the state of one's soul is expected."²² We must expect it and practice it!

Rule

I find the regularity of my devotional life to be of utmost importance. It is the pattern and intention that prioritizes the practice. Foster encourages prayer to be regular in both time and place. It can be maintained if it is a habit and a regular practice of

¹⁹ Baker, *Soul Keeping*, 36.

²⁰ Baker, *Soul Keeping*, 46.

²¹ Fryling, *Seeking God Together*, 17.

²² Baker, *Soul Keeping*, 137.

discipline.²³ He helps us remember that practice makes perfect. We cannot speak face to face as Moses did if our prayer life is erratic and not one of “holy habit.”²⁴ Regarding place, Thomas calls this special place of prayer our Gethsemane, because that was often Jesus’ special place of prayer and he would often return to it. We should also have a special place of prayer that we can return to for the purpose of prayer and communing with God.²⁵

Keeping the regularity of prayer and discipline is important. It is difficult in times of barrenness, but means so much more when it is not based solely on emotion. Harris equates this with loving feelings towards his wife, sometimes they are not there, but emotion returns when the discipline of love and will are employed.²⁶ One of St Clare’s greatest achievements was the Rule she wrote just three years prior to her death. She had observed this pattern of life that she believed in so thoroughly because she knew it worked.²⁷

One of the first complaints about dedication to spiritual life and formation usually concerns time. In speaking of rest and Sabbath, Buchanan explains the difference in the Greek meanings of time. First was *chronos*—and this one we know is the time that is being lost, that devours, and it is the “deity of the driven.” The other is *kairos*—and this is time seen as a gift; it is purposeful and redeeming. *Kairos* is the time of the one

²³ Richard J. Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Hearts True Home* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2008), 74-75.

²⁴ Foster, *Prayer*, 120.

²⁵ Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 33.

²⁶ Mark Harris, *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey: Discovering the Disciplines of the Saints* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2005), 58.

²⁷ Flinders, *Enduring Grace*, 35.

inclined to spiritual formation.²⁸ Buchanan describes the irony of those that have redeemed time in comparison to those driven by time. Those that “guard every minute” are those that resent interruptions, where the stuff of miracles tend to happen (Matt 14:13-21), and never have enough time to accomplish what they want. Those who tend to redeem time and sanctify it seem to have it in excess.²⁹ And so, to help, we look to those who used time as a gift, those who redeemed time in making a life of God-given priority and meaning.

St Benedict

St Benedict and his Rule present an interesting point in that their daily activities could (and would) “stop whatever they are doing to acknowledge that their God is managing the world just fine without them for the moment.”³⁰ Benedict’s approach to redeeming each moment to live consciously for God was of particular interest to me.³¹ I find Chittister’s modern interpretation of Benedict’s daily prayer office gripping, and I want to include it here: “The point is clear: there is to be no time, no thing, that absorbs us so much that we lose contact with the God of life; no stress so tension producing, no burden so complex, no work so exhausting that God is not our greatest agenda, our constant companion, our rest and our refuge.”³²

²⁸ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 36-37.

²⁹ Buchanan, *The Rest of God*, 83.

³⁰ Butcher, *Man of Blessing*, 61.

³¹ Joan Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict: a Spirituality for the 21st Century* (New York: Crossroad, 2010), 4.

³² Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 121.

Far removed from the notion that living by a Rule does not require us to think, but simply to follow, is an assertion from Benedict that we should live consciously. We are to listen carefully to instruction, and put into practice the art of letting nothing go past that we have not put through the filter of meaning. This point takes us to listening. Putting into practice that craft of listening to the Voice of God in all that we do—this meaningful way of living pulls us out of living only for self, but instead for him.³³

Thus with the Rule of St Benedict, there is a self-discipline that is involved, and though that may turn people off, it is a deliberate choice one makes to grow in the direction that God desires. In the prologue of his Rule, Benedict gives a warning: “The good of all concerned, however, may prompt us to a little strictness in order to amend faults and to safeguard love.” Chittister goes on to say that we do not achieve a fruitful spiritual life by wishful thinking, but rather by deliberate discipline that becomes “a way of life, an attitude of mind, an orientation of soul.”³⁴

An important distinction for my purposes here is made by Benedict for the leadership of the monastery or abbey: spiritual development is above all, and loving God supremely comes before any protection of institutional or physical need. The souls of those that are under the leader’s care are the most important after all. He reminds us to keep our minds on things above and not the temporal things.³⁵ However, the Rule of Benedict does not ignore the stuff of reality, but instead lives life with a purpose and

³³ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 4-5.

³⁴ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 21.

³⁵ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 48.

exhibits care for others.³⁶ Writing this from a Salvation Army perspective, I applaud and acknowledge the need for mercy towards and care of the poor. Benedict writes, “Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ (Matt. 16:24; Luke 9:23); discipline your body (1 Cor. 9:27); ‘do not pamper yourself, but love fasting.’ You must relieve the lot of the poor, ‘clothe the naked, visit the sick’ (Matt. 25:36), and bury the dead. Go to help the troubled and console the sorrowing.”³⁷ Living the Rule with purpose of a heart centered on God and caring for his creation is the spirit of the Rule.

Much of the direction given by Benedict in the area of soul care is the basic discipline of spiritual formation. Those age-old practices of holy reading, prayer, and confession are to be upheld.³⁸ Again, those disciplines are proven places where God has revealed himself before and are ways we can open ourselves to his grace. Regularity of life is also a part of Benedict’s Rule—how much to eat, sleep and work are important matters to life. Each can give its reverence to the Giver, not to escape this world for the heavenly one, but to live well for him in this one.³⁹

More than anything else we can take from the Rule of Benedict for my purpose here is balance and life-giving discipline. The measure of a day is spent doing what is most important—not in a rigid way, but flexibly and with understanding. Benedict stresses the attitude in which we do something more than the thing itself, which has us living in reality and not in a fantasy world where nothing can go quite as planned.

³⁶ “Essential Measures” is a letter written by Founder William Booth to his officers in leadership positions. He agrees with the spiritual care of officers being the top priority as well as with the care—both physical and spiritual—of others.

³⁷ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 57.

³⁸ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 63.

³⁹ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 211.

Spirituality is our great stabilizer.⁴⁰ It stands in the face of chaos and holds us to what is the most important—to love and serve him supremely.

St Francis and St Clare

The spiritual growth of St Francis as described by G.K. Chesterton was of a supernatural nature. As he followed in the imitation of Christ, his own life became more and more spirit-filled and supernatural.⁴¹ Scholars of St Francis encourage the reader to read his works in chronological order, so that they can see the spiritual growth that takes place through his writing.⁴² Spiritual formation is not a once in a lifetime event, but is a lifelong journey. We are always being formed, whether positively or negatively writes Jim Wilhoit: “All persons are being shaped spiritually: their heart or spirit (the core of their being) is undergoing formation.”⁴³

Francis may be less structured and more moderate than Benedict, but his formation remained true to his supreme love—his Savior.⁴⁴ This relationship with Christ is of first priority. In his Rule, Francis made this his first desire: “Let us desire nothing else, let us wish for nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator and Redeemer and Savior, the one true God.”⁴⁵ Because of this obvious first

⁴⁰ Chittister, *The Rule of Benedict*, 223.

⁴¹ G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Francis of Assisi* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2015), 159.

⁴² Francis et al., *Francis and Clare*, 8.

⁴³ Jim Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 34-35.

⁴⁴ Susan Pitchford, *Following Francis: the Franciscan Way for Everyone* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2006), 5.

⁴⁵ Francis et al., *Francis and Clare*, 133.

passion, I find the writings and life of St Francis to be truly valuable in establishing my own Rule of Life and can model much of it according to the priorities given by him.

Another area of attention for Francis that is important as we narrow in on a Rule of Life for Salvation Army officers is simplicity. His work among the poor was intense—giving away all that he had to anyone with great need.⁴⁶ Franciscan follower Susan Pitchford brings into focus Matthew 25 in connection with St Francis' Rule of Life. It was a life that modeled honoring God by not passing by any strangers in need, for they are also image bearers of Christ. Speaking of how we follow Francis in this way, she writes:

The poor of developing countries surely are some of the least of Jesus; brethren, and he assures us that whatever we do for them—or fail to do—he will take personally. *That* is poverty's claim on us: the God we claim to honor, whose name we bear, is wasting away in a Harare slum, or watching her child die of malaria or starvation, or sitting discouraged on a Pittsburgh stoop. Do we recognize him? The reason Francis is more than a figure on a birdbath is because, as Bonaventure put it, he “saw Christ's image in every poor person he met and he was prepared to give them everything he had, even if he himself had urgent need of it.”⁴⁷

St Clare, a close associate and friend of St Francis, also pursued this way of poverty. She was disappointed that once St Francis died, the brothers of St Francis did not carry on with the plight of the poor she thought necessary and so she took up the cause. Because his teaching on poverty did not have papal authority, Clare decided she would not make a similar mistake. She wrote her own Rule, including the exact practice of poverty to be

⁴⁶ Pitchford, *Following Francis*, 79.

⁴⁷ Pitchford, *Following Francis*, 83.

maintained by her nuns. To her delight, Pope Innocent IV confirmed her Rule just a day before her death.⁴⁸

Joan Mueller says of Saint Clare that theologically she was “profoundly inspired by the concept of an infinitely rich God who chose to come among humankind as a poor baby. God, who had infinite treasure, became voluntarily poor out of a deep and salvific love for humanity.”⁴⁹ Francis and Clare are important figures for The Salvation Army officer because their mission is much like ours...to serve others and seek out the lost and depraved as a part of our everyday life.⁵⁰

Individual Rule of Life

Many helpful practices for prayer and spiritual consistency are found in the literature. Much of it is dedicated to finding the right “fit” for each believer. Foster tells us that journal keeping is very helpful for certain people, but it is not the same for everyone. What is valuable for some in journaling is not beneficial for all.⁵¹ He also talks about listening prayer that one can partake in while doing mundane tasks. While experiencing the ordinary, one can engage the extraordinary.⁵² Finding a strategy that helps with spiritual consistency is a useful tool in forming a Rule of Life.

⁴⁸ Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2008), 2.

⁴⁹ Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty*, 6.

⁵⁰ The Mission Statement of The Salvation Army: “The Salvation Army, as international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.”

⁵¹ Foster, *Prayer*, 34.

⁵² Foster, *Prayer*, 163.

The most helpful practices for finding a personalized strategy were discovered through an exploration of spiritual temperaments in *Sacred Pathways*. Prayer and spiritual relationship in general is felt most deeply and nourishes more fully when it suits one's own temperament. In Thomas' words, we often think it necessary and holy to "feed on someone else's diet," when really we should be nourishing ourselves through the different means God has made available to us.⁵³ In speaking about the union of the bridegroom, Bernard of Clairvaux noted that intimacy is different for everyone, and there are different arrangements according to the lover.⁵⁴

Describing her contemplative life of prayer, St Clare of Assisi puts forth one's own image within a mirror. Gaze into it and see those virtues congruent with Christ's own life as with yours. When we look closer and closer at the image of God, we are looking at our own true selves. When that unity between God and self is realized we can be fully absorbed in him.⁵⁵ Harris describes "being awake to the holiness of the ordinary,"⁵⁶ which I find helpful in prayer. Being alert to glimpses of God's presence helps my prayer life. These are a mere few of the many helpful practices given. Finding how God reaches us personally is the goal, and consistently meeting with him the practice for the spiritual component of a personal Rule of Life.

Establishing one's individual Rule of Life should be done with one's own personal temperament, life-giving work, relationships and self-care in mind. Stephen A. Macchia has modernized the monastic approach to a Rule of Life and has made it

⁵³ Thomas, *Sacred Pathways*, 21.

⁵⁴ Bernard McGinn, *The Essential Writings of Christian Mysticism* (New York: Modern Library, 2006), 31.

⁵⁵ Flinders, *Enduring Grace*, 24.

⁵⁶ Harris, *Companions for Your Spiritual Journey*, 32.

applicable to an individual life. I rely heavily on his teaching and instruction as I seek to help officers focus in on their own Rule—both the one they have been following and the Divine one that is waiting to be discovered. Each officer involved in the study will craft and follow their own Rule of Life with the help of Macchia’s manual. Though the guide is an individualized approach to establishing a Rule of Life, there is opportunity and encouragement to do this task as a community.⁵⁷ That is important both for this study and for the community to which we belong.

Salvation Army Rule

The Salvation Army is not without rules and regulations—we are structured in a militaristic fashion after all! I do not want to suggest that we add “one more thing” to an already “too much” lifestyle. What I do want to suggest is that we begin to streamline the expectations, orders, and ministry of a Salvation Army officer and each begin to personally assemble a Rule of Life that encompasses the officer’s individual calling to The Salvation Army, their spiritual life, and their home life into a fulfilling Rule that God can use and bless. Not every single thing that hits our plate each day is the most important thing, and so a prioritization strategy is crucial. Crafting an individual Rule of Life can help do just that. First, I will explore a couple of the guiding strategies for officers that are already in place.

The *Orders and Regulations for Corps Officers* is a guidebook for Salvation Army officers and it begins by describing the Corps Officers position—as well as giving a list of demands that include the management of people, the ability to prioritize and

⁵⁷ Stephen A. Macchia, *Crafting A Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-ordered Way* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 13-18.

work methodically, the leading by example a life that many are watching, and to walk closely with God. I include that last expectation paragraph here:

They must walk closely with God and be constantly endued with Divine power, if they are to bring about the spiritual miracles required of them. Decline in their spiritual life would involve speaking of what they do not themselves experience, or else their remaining silent on all-important topics with those to whom they are the God-appointed messengers.⁵⁸

This is easier said than done in most cases. However, the demands are there for a purpose and it becomes the responsibility of the officer to maintain this life of example in the face of what may be very chaotic days. The *Orders and Regulations* goes on in some detail to acknowledge the responsibilities of the corps officer to make expected “spiritual, numerical and financial progress in their Corps.”⁵⁹ Throughout the manual are regulations and guidance in specific programs and expectations of the Corps. There is a lot in reference to business, property and programs. There is not much more in reference to the personal life of the officer, the maintaining of devotional life, or the home life of the officers’ family. This is precisely the area where I hope to help officers form a Rule, thereby inserting some order into a busy ministry life.

For more specific guidance for an individual corps, one would turn to the individual Corps Brief of Appointment. In this manual an officer completes in the farewell weeks of their appointment and receives from the previous officer in their new appointment, are the detailed expectations of the individual assignment. Different for every corps, this manual specifies the needs for individual programs, finances, property, employees, corps members and leaders. Daily, weekly, and quarterly schedules are often

⁵⁸ The Salvation Army, *Orders and Regulations for Corps Officers of The Salvation Army* (London: International Headquarters, 1948), 1-2.

⁵⁹ The Salvation Army, *Orders and Regulations for Corps Officers of The Salvation Army*, 11.

included and these are helpful in shaping the officers' time management in completing the tasks. Of course, this direction is from the previous officer and may or may not coincide with the new officer's life situation.

One can see that The Salvation Army has many rules and structures already in place, but that there is not much for the individual officer—just the expectation that they make it all work. An even more individualized approach is needed here for the officer—not just appointment expectations and guidance. Our community is made up of individual officers, each offering their strengths and personal ministries to the community of The Salvation Army. It is important for them to form strong mission-minded lives that include their ministries, relationships, and spiritual and personal care, in order to contribute in a healthy manner to the community.

Red Epaulet Community

Much of the saints' writings dealt in community and in solitude—two important topics for the modern disciple as well. Foster describes the dependence of community on our relationship with God. We cannot love one without the other. To do so would “cut off the pulmonary artery of God.” God's love must flow to his people and we are the conduits of that.⁶⁰ Howard L. Rice, writing in Shawchuck and Job's compilation, states that it is our own experience that feeds our involvement with others. We are liberated from self-reliance and ambition to be more caring and compassionate to others.⁶¹ St Benedict and his sister Scholastica like him, strove to incorporate the chief importance of

⁶⁰ Foster, *Prayer*, 255.

⁶¹ Norman Shawchuck and Rueben P. Job, *A Guide to Prayer for All who Seek God* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 2006), 327.

community in the act of loving God. Working with others, praying and caring for others was of great importance. Butcher describes Scholastica as one who “spent her life praising God by loving others in great detail.”⁶²

Not ones to live in solitude while in monasteries, St Francis and St Clare emphasize the need for quietness and solitude of mind and heart, though living and working communally.⁶³ One doesn’t really appreciate solitude or community until one has both. Jesus calls us to both. St Catherine of Siena, after a time of solitude, received a vision when her solitude was over. She pictured Jesus outside her room calling her to love others outside too. That is how she could best love him.⁶⁴

In that thought, I find the community of The Salvation Army to be a fertile ground for this Rhythm and Rule in the life of an officer. We seek to love and serve him supremely all our days, and we understand that to mean we serve his people. Like St Francis, we seek to bring salvation and help to the lost, and like St Benedict, we work and pray in equal rhythms and in honor to God. Approaching the importance of a Rule of Life and the difference it can make will have us deepen The Salvation Army community, and specifically, the lives of those in red epaulets, our Salvation Army officers.

Much of our culture in our community comes from our history. Thus literature to understand Army theology comes from founder William Booth, theologian Samuel Logan Brengle, modern scholars in The Salvation Army community, and our current “Rules.” There is attention needed in this officer community for care in the areas of “time, trust, temple, treasure, and talent.” These are the areas worked through with

⁶² Butcher, *Man of Blessing*, 138-139.

⁶³ Francis et al., *Francis and Clare*, 216-218.

⁶⁴ Flinders, *Enduring Grace*, 114.

officers in this study, following Macchia's guide book *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*.

Given our specific community—that of Salvation Army officers—in this study I have consulted and brought into focus those who have written on these subject areas from a Salvation Army perspective. This is not to say other individuals, churches, and non-profit organizations would not benefit from establishing a Rule of Life in these areas, but I believe that Salvation Army officers most assuredly would.

Time: Spiritual Priorities

A spiritual priority is, in essence, the foundation that should be built upon in Salvation Army officership. William Booth wrote to leaders outlining “essential measures” of success that they must obtain and exhibit. Not surprisingly, he wrote, “I remark that the first and foremost of these [essential measures] is the absolute necessity for *spiritual life*.” He goes on to say that not only is this the most essential, but that we cannot go on without it.⁶⁵ In a series of speeches to his officers in 1904, Booth again emphasized that life itself is most in need of divine inspiration. The spiritual life is imparted and sustained by Jesus Christ and nothing makes up for a lack thereof.⁶⁶

Booth illustrates the point:

Take this in its application to a Corps. If you want an active, generous, fighting, dare-devil Corps, able and willing to drive hell before it, that Corps must be possessed, and that fully, by this spirit of life. Nothing else can effectively take its place. No education, learning, Bible knowledge, theology, social amusements, or anything of the kind will be a satisfactory substitute. The Corps that seeks to put any of these things in the place of

⁶⁵William Booth, *Essential Measures* (London: Salvation Books, 2009), 4.

⁶⁶ William Booth, *The Seven Spirits: or, What I Teach My Officers* (Atlanta, GA: Salvation Army Supplies and Purchasing Dept., 1985), 12-14.

life will find them a mockery, a delusion, and a snare; will find them to be only the wraps and trappings of death itself. And if it is so in the corps, it is so ten thousand times more in the Officer who commands that Corps—in you!⁶⁷

There is no mistaking the founder's position on the spiritual life. It is the beginning and foundation of the officer and soldiery. Without it, the mission is lost. Salvation Army theologian Samuel Logan Brengle gives similar advice to a friend. He tells him to be in the constant practice of lifting his heart to God, so much so that it would become as natural as breathing. He put it this way, "Keep within whispering distance of God always."⁶⁸

Trust: Relational Priorities

The current general, Andre Cox, has created an accountability framework that includes asking about our relationships in The Salvation Army as a mission priority. He states that accountability discussions should begin by focusing on people rather than programs, buildings or budgets. People are made in the image and likeness of God and should not be treated as tools or commodities, but with value and understanding.⁶⁹ People are important. Relationships are crucial. Asking these questions about our relationships falls well into this Trust Priority. People have always been the heartbeat of The Salvation Army, but we often need the reminder. Brengle recalls Booth saying to "[t]ake care of the fire in your own souls, because the tendency of fire is to go out." He goes on to give helpful instruction for fanning the flame in the souls of those we have been called to care

⁶⁷ Booth, *The Seven Spirits*, 16.

⁶⁸ Brengle, *Samuel Logan Brengle*, 106-107.

⁶⁹ Andre Cox, *Journey of Renewal: The Accountability Movement of The Salvation Army* (London: Salvation Books, 2016), 34-35.

for.⁷⁰ I would add that there is not much literature for officers on taking care of the people at home. We find this can be a dry area of ministry—family relationships, that is, and personal testimony and interviews tell the story there. We must care for our people—including those we are married to and our own children, in order to keep Relational Priority in balance.

Temple: Physical Priorities

In The Salvation Army there is a history of the founding fathers and mothers working to utter exhaustion, often at the expense of their health. Brengle recognized early the need for good health and “Physical Priorities”:

It is vital that the servant of God live a healthy life. That means he or she will relax. I know of evangelists who saw tremendous fruit for God in their early years, but then their health broke down and they had to pull back. I am convinced that if they had obeyed the Lord’s rule of six days work and one day’s rest, they would have kept going. Work is absolutely necessary for health, but so is rest.⁷¹

In this modern day, we place an emphasis on the officer’s personal health in The Salvation Army. It is, of course, up to the officer to pay attention to the matter and follow through with the excellent health provisions provided. Founding mother Catherine Booth put it this way, “A few hours of extra sleep, and a little less to eat, would save many a defeat and put to flight many a doubt.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Brengle, *Samuel Logan Brengle*, 151-153.

⁷¹ Brengle, *Samuel Logan Brengle*, 153.

⁷² Allen Satterlee, *Notable Quotables: A Compendium of Gems from Salvation Army Literature* (Atlanta, GA: Salvation Army Supplies, 1985), 88.

Treasure: Financial Priorities

As a community, The Salvation Army and its officers have a focus on the poor and down and out. These are “our people” and the ones we feel called to serve and fight for. Our financial position should reflect the accountability to “Do the Most Good”⁷³ with those funds and treasures entrusted to us to help the most in their greatest time of need. Being rich is not a community priority, but we do seek to use what is entrusted to us effectively. Frederick Booth-Tucker said of this position, “Do not let us even desire to be rich, either as individuals or as an organization. Let us choose to be poor. Let us fling the devil’s golden bribes back in his face. This will give us power in dealing alike with rich and poor, whereas a spirit even wishing to be rich will cripple our influence and hinder our testimony.”⁷⁴

Talent: Missional Priorities

In exploring a personal Missional Priority when *Crafting a Rule of Life*, Macchia begins with the question: “What are you summoned to do with your life?”⁷⁵ Officers in The Salvation Army have the mission and calling of community, but also unique and individual missional calls. Because we are each specially gifted and equipped for ministry in the organization, we can be sure that God has an individual purpose for our ministry.

⁷³ “*Doing The Most Good*” is The Salvation Army’s national brand strategy and distinct identifiable message. Moreover, it is a promise the organization makes to its contributors, clients, associates, officers and employees. The Salvation Army pledges to *Do The Most Good* with contributions of money, time and resources, evidenced in that 82 cents of every dollar donated are directly allocated to services that assist people in need.

⁷⁴ Satterlee, *Notable Quotables*, 133.

⁷⁵ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 127.

He is looking for the uniqueness of a personal heart given over and surrendered to him fully. Brengle in *Helps to Holiness* explains who God is looking for to do his work:

A while ago I was talking with a Christian merchant who expressed an important truth: “People are asking God to use them, but sometimes he cannot. There are plenty of people who come to me and want work in my store, but I cannot use them; they are not fit for my work...The fact is, God is using everybody that He can, and using them to the full extent of their fitness for His service...God wants men and women, and He is hunting for them everywhere; but, like the merchant, He has to pass by hundreds before He finds the right individuals...Oh, how God wants to use you!”⁷⁶

A heart surrendered to God and his purpose he will use, and He will use us individually within our red epaulet community. Finding my own unique mission and making it a priority was enlightening. Helping young officers through this pivotal part of establishing their Rule of Life is a joy.

Conclusion

Thinking again on that running toddler with the balance troubles with whom this chapter began...when officers lose their balance of spiritual life, ministry and relationships, it can be heartbreaking to watch. The thesis-project I now turn to will incorporate the use of an individual Rule of Life guide in the lives of sixteen young officers within their first three years of ministry. Building on the literature that supports this process, I believe The Salvation Army officer’s life could greatly benefit from the support of such an individual Rule of Life. Through the literature put forth in this chapter it is clear that a life of balance is not an easy endeavor, but it is a necessary one for the experience of loving and serving God supremely each day. This experience can be helped and guided through a Rule of Life, which was exemplified by St Benedict and St Francis,

⁷⁶ Brengle, *Helps to Holiness*, 44-45.

and then in a more modern approach for the individual in Macchia's guide. The unique community of The Salvation Army, where the officers in this study are, necessitates a special look at foundational as well as modern interpretations of the Rule of Life. These have been supported through Salvation Army literature and doctrine. I thus begin the project to test the hypothesis that officers in this ministry setting of The Salvation Army, having a ministry leader invested in helping them navigate their first appointment, and with an accountability tool based on their own commitment to God, will flourish sooner and more vibrantly in their ministry. I begin with sixteen officers in their first three years of officership and the project of implementing a Rule of Life individually, with the purpose of that process remaining throughout...*to love and serve him supremely all my days.*

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT AND ANALYSIS

Hypothesis

Officers in this ministry setting of The Salvation Army, with a ministry leader invested in helping them navigate their first appointment, and with an accountability tool based on their own commitments to God, could flourish sooner and more vibrantly in their ministry.

Introduction

What is perhaps needed for these young Salvation Army officers is a priority check-up between their time at the Training School and through their first few years as officers. They need resources and leaders that will help them place an emphasis on their relationship with Christ as the first priority in their lives. Leaders in The Salvation Army continue to check on skill levels in finance, programs, and platforms, but not always on how officers are living a life in balance that puts priority on that first promise in our Officers' Covenant. "To love and serve him supremely all of my days"¹ does not always have the significance that it should in each officer's life, and it isn't always expected from young Salvation Army leaders. The hope is that with this thesis-project, the officer participants will be directed and encouraged to find the time, the resources, and the commitment to love and serve their Savior supremely.

¹ The Salvation Army, "My Covenant," accessed August 14, 2015, <https://www.salvationist.org/poverty.nsf>.

To test the hypothesis, sixteen officers within their first three years of ministry were gathered as participants. Nine officers were in their third year at the time of the thesis-project, two were in their second year, and five were in their first few weeks. Each was given a pre-project interview to determine how things had been going since leaving The Salvation Army Training School and entering the field as a corps officer. They then began the process of reading and giving feedback for each chapter (chapters 1-10) of Stephen Macchia's Rule of Life book, *Crafting a Rule of Life: An Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way*.² As described in the previous chapter, this particular book is very useful in helping officers assess, learn, and prioritize the relationships and responsibilities coming their way daily. The participants were then led through the process at their own pace and provided help when needed to craft their own Rule of Life. After assembling their personal Rule, each put this into practice for three to five weeks. A post-project interview was then given to assess feedback and progress. This process tested the hypothesis that those putting the accountability tool into practice early can flourish early in their ministry.

Participants

The sixteen officers who provided feedback are a good representation of those in the field with the same amount of service time. They range from those with high school education to Master's degree level. There are eight married couples, six with children and two without. There are four out of the Adult Rehabilitation program (drug and alcohol rehabilitation) and five are Salvation Army officer's children. Most have been a part of

² Stephen A. Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life: an Invitation to the Well-Ordered Way* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012).

the Salvation Army for many years, but four are newer. Overall, there is a good mix of individuals as participants for this project.³

Project Design

The pre-project interviews were conducted between June 27, 2017 and July 6, 2017 for all sixteen participants in the thesis-project. Once the interviews were complete, each participant received a copy of *Crafting a Rule of Life* and instructions to interact with the director of the project for each chapter and throughout the process. They were encouraged to go at their own pace and were sent reminders each week of the assigned chapter along with encouragement to interact. Following the completion of the book, they were each tasked with assembling and committing to their crafted Rule of Life for around one month. Since the pace of reading was different per individual, the month of implementation started between September 20, 2017 and October 28, 2017 and participants were interviewed post-project between October 25, 2017 and November 21, 2017. Once the Rule of Life month of application was complete, each participant completed a Post-Project Interview. Data from the Pre-Project Interview, the feedback from the *Crafting a Rule of Life* reading and assembling are included below and further detailed in Appendix 2. The results and feedback of the Post-Project Interviews will also be contained in this chapter of the thesis-project, as well as the full data in Appendix 3.

Pre-Project Interviews

For feedback about the first years of ministry and the part played by spiritual formation, sixteen officers were consulted: nine officers after their first two years of

³ Further participant descriptions are contained in Appendix 1

ministry, two officers after their first year, and five officers their very first week in their new appointment. This was an initial gathering of feedback on the subject of spiritual formation only. It was expected that those just starting out would be strong in this area after their two years in The Salvation Army School for Officer's Training, but then after one or two years their overload of responsibility may be having an effect. It was overwhelming to witness how inundated they already were with other matters: family life, worship preparation, reports, statistics and social services. For the most part, their own spiritual formation had been challenged significantly and adversely. In contrast, those just starting out were very positive in their answers and were not experiencing the effects of those already in their appointments for over a year.

The pre-project interview was a simple questionnaire to assess the starting point for each of the officer participants. Some specific questions asked concerned the spiritual formation of their lives and balance in ministry. This was to discover the method and how often they were communicating with God as compared to everything else they were experiencing in their daily life and routine. The idea was to narrow in on the "loving and serving him supremely" aspect, and discover whether it was getting lost in the face of other responsibilities.

Specific questions asked were:

1. Do you have a set "quiet time?" When is it and what does it usually consist of?
2. Has this area been a struggle? Does it feel like it's something else to "get done?"
3. Can you give examples of how your personal time has fed your ministry?

Table 1: Responses to Interview Question 1⁴

Do you have a set aside “quiet time” with God? When? Where?																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Year in Ministry	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
No	X			X	X		X									
Yes, not consistent		X				X		X			X		X			
Yes, consistent			X						X	X		X		X	X	X

There is a difference between the officers in their first weeks and those further along. Clearly, those who have yet to encounter all that officership is about to throw their way have a more consistent and intentional time devoted to God. (The pre-project interviews for the first year officers was conducted before they officially started in their new appointments.) All accepted the priority of time with God, and most accepted their “defeat” in upholding it as *the first* priority. Though none saw it as a “task,” not one mentioned the relationship factor with the time spent. It was interesting that in the group, none mentioned having a successful, consistent and worthwhile quiet time, although each mentioned that it was the most important thing. Though unexpressed, it may be that the priority is not there from the angle of The Salvation Army’s accountability of its officers. So much is expected from these young officers, but not a lot of it concerns their personal relationship with Christ. In so many officers’ experience, it is been easy to place more importance on reports, statistics, and ministry items, than on a personal relationship from which all of those things should stem. Perhaps these young colleagues are expressing the

⁴ Full Pre-Project Interview Questions and Responses in Appendix 2.

same frustration. Here, Participant G expresses her frustrations: “I have tried to find a good time for this and honestly I am failing miserably. I feel convicted every day that I need to make this a priority and set a time that I absolutely will not allow to be interrupted or completely neglected. Since starting officership, to be embarrassingly honest, I have really neglected my personal devotions.”

Table 2: Responses to Interview Question 2

Has the area of Spiritual Formation been a struggle? Does it feel like it's something else to "get done"?																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Year in Ministry	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
Yes a struggle	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		X
Overwhelmed by other things/people	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X		X
No, not a struggle										X		X			X	

Notably, the participants struggling the most were in their third year of ministry, and those struggling the least were in their first week—before all of the responsibilities, demands and needs have arisen in ministry life. The feedback generated from these officers had many similar themes and frustrations—especially among those already engaged in ministry for more than a year. There was a strong similarity between those with young children in that there was no chance of quiet time at home. An overwhelming frustration that time spent with God was both something crucial, but also seemingly impossible to do at home was noted. Those with specific quiet times, or times they worked in, consisted of ten minutes or less. Many also explained the tasks confronting

them as soon as they got to the office made that a difficult place to have a consistent time with God as well.

Table 3: Responses to Interview Question 3

Are there any examples you can give on how your personal time with God has fed your ministry? How has that time affected the rest of your day?																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Year in Ministry	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
No--unaffected					X											
Yes—affected	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

From this question it is clear that, regardless if they do or do not fit in quiet time with God consistently, they do feel the effects throughout the day when they do. Only one felt that there were not examples of this that they could draw from their own quiet time. The importance of this question and its answer is to see the benefits and positive results of having a spiritual formation experience—that it actually helps in times of struggle throughout the day. It is not one more thing to get done, but a necessity in facing with confidence the lesser things of the day.

Crafting a Rule of Life: Read and Respond

With these officers responding the way that they were, it seemed they were in the right place to take the journey through the book *Crafting a Rule of Life: an Invitation to the Well-ordered Way* by Stephen Macchia. They would be concentrating on Chapters 1-10, which go through the process of creating an individual Rule of Life. Concerning the journey for each of the participants, the study would be flexible to match their reading

speeds and time availability. In order to keep things moving, a weekly email was sent to the participants, still keeping them anonymous, with Chapter highlights and guidance. They were able to write back with any feedback, questions, or responses they had. Also accepted was acknowledgement that they had read the chapter without any particular feedback. Each chapter had responses from different participants—indicating they were working through a tough spot that was touched on by the chapter, or that it really resonated with them somehow. Because it was insightful to read through each chapter along with the participants, some of their feedback will be helpful here.

Chapter One—Roles

The responses from the first chapter’s reading mostly centered on time given to life-draining relationships, The Salvation Army’s “pre-determined” roles, and the trellis metaphor regarding a Rule of Life and discipline.⁵

First, the participants really responded on the instruction to write down all the relationships that they hold, and then what roles they find themselves in regarding those relationships. Participant C found the practice eye opening. She writes,

Obviously as a wife, mother, corps officer, daughter, and sister I fill a lot of roles. It was a surprise to me that some of the ones that I invest a lot of time in are actually life draining, and the ones that I should be investing more time and effort into are given the bare minimum of attention that is required. It reminded me that where I spend my time and energy says a lot about my current “Rule of Life.” And if I am wanting to craft a new one that will get me to where I so desire to be in my walk with Christ then I need to make some much needed changes.⁶

⁵ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 14-15.

⁶ Participant C, e-mail message to author, July 7, 2017.

Participant K also saw some relationships that were taking energy away and having an unhealthy dominance, “My key relationships in which I am both the boss and pastor are the most life—draining for me.”⁷ A similar observation of time distributed poorly among relationship roles was observed by Participant G, who wrote: “In thinking about my roles I’m finding that the ones I rank the highest aren’t the ones that actually get the most attention, time, or effort. It seems I have a disconnect between the roles I call a priority and the ones I actually make a priority.”⁸ One participant saw the most neglected relationship was with herself, “In listing all the relationships I kept thinking about my relationship with myself. That was the saddest one. Because I spend so much time pouring myself into all these other relationships I rarely take any time to focus on my relationship with myself.”⁹

Some participants were concerned about The Salvation Army’s own indication of roles and relationships that may factor into their crafting a Rule of Life. Participant D believes it might be difficult to avoid the pre-determined roles of The Salvation Army. He says, “I’m interested to see how many roles are defaulted in the job description of a corps officer. Taking into account that [Macchia] believes that you can only really handle 7-9 different roles at once. In many ways it may point to why many officers really struggle with certain parts of their relationships with other people.”¹⁰ Participant F described the same concern, “In some ways, I was worried that crafting a Rule of Life

⁷ Participant K, e-mail message to author, July 10, 2017.

⁸ Participant G, e-mail message to author, July 20, 2017.

⁹ Participant E, e-mail message to author, August 19, 2017.

¹⁰ Participant D, e-mail message to author, July 19, 2017.

may be an exercise in futility because my perception of the Army is that I will be placed in different ministries without much input or choice.”¹¹

Finally, in discovering what a Rule of Life is through the book, the metaphor of the trellis was especially helpful. Participants E and I both mention this specific explanation of how the Rule of Life functions from the introduction:

There is already a rule in place that you are following today. Isn't it time to give up our unwritten rule and prayerfully write one that more closely matches the heartbeat of God?

Those who fail to do so are like wild, untamed grape vines. They will produce some fruit, but they probably won't be as abundant as they could be. Instead, they become more vulnerable to things that threaten their spiritual vitality. However, those who are intentionally reflective, prayerful and attentively responsive are like cultivated vines. Growing on a trellis (a rule of life) and cultivated toward maturity, they become spiritually formed. The trellis curbs our tendency to wander and supports our rather frail attempts to be nurtured spiritually. Our lives will produce an abundance of fruit for the glory of God. Mature vines are cultivated to produce the best fruit.¹²

This was a helpful explanation of the Rule of Life process in the life of a believer. This gave understanding that this project would not be “one more thing” to do, but would help give structure to all that they are called to be and do in their lives.

Chapter Two—Gifts

The discovery of spiritual gifts and God-given talents and temperaments was life enriching for the participants. They expressed the freedom they felt after reading this chapter to cultivate their own gifts and not try to take on gifts that are not their own. Participant O expressed it this way: “The best part for me was realizing the need to

¹¹ Participant F, e-mail message to author, July 20, 2017.

¹² Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 14-15.

improve on the gifts He has already given me. I cannot have all of the gifts, and that is okay. Some gifts I will never have and I shouldn't force it."¹³ Similarly Participant I says, "I need to always be intentional about taking an honest inventory of myself, and reflecting on whether I'm exerting my energy into *my* gifts, and not areas that don't line up with God's purpose for my live (even 'good things')."¹⁴

Some struggle was seen as participants were looking to see how their temperaments and gifts could be used where they were ministering. Getting comfortable in their abilities and not striving for something else that seems to fit better was a struggle. Participant F writes regarding this, "Maybe being a young leader in my first appointment, I am just being humbled and challenged by the many different areas of responsibility. I am realizing that I am not so good at some things that I have always been told or assumed I was good at."¹⁵ Participant H also expresses a difficulty in this matter when he states, "It has been a challenge at times to focus on and embrace exactly who I am."¹⁶

Chapter two provided much to consider concerning gifts, temperaments and talents. No-one indicated a struggle with expressing talents, but many requested spiritual gifts inventories and personality inventories to further dig into what gifts and abilities have been given to them and how they could best use them.

¹³ Participant O, e-mail message to author, July 28, 2017.

¹⁴ Participant I, e-mail message to author, July 25, 2017.

¹⁵ Participant F, e-mail message to author, July 28, 2017.

¹⁶ Participant H, e-mail message to author, August 19, 2017.

Chapter Three—Desires

Chapter three responses were varied due to differences in core values and desires. Finding one's unique purpose within The Salvation Army's overall purpose was helpful for the participants. Participant I said, "God really spoke to me personally in the statements about how we can so easily 'waste our life,' and miss the purpose for which we were created."¹⁷

Having stepped back and evaluated her own purpose, Participant G had this to say about the process:

I'm working on my self-awareness. I actually get discouraged when I find it hard to answer some of these questions [in the chapter], but as I've moved along the reading is helping me to understand where that struggle comes from. I'm praying that my desires will align with God's desires for me, that I will be able to rid myself of all my selfish wants and desires, and that God will teach me to prioritize my responsibilities to better reflect the areas I value most.¹⁸

It is not an easy process to see that what you have valued in your prioritization needs an overhaul. It is a joy to know that God wants this fulfilling and bountiful life, but it is not always present without regret for past practices.

Chapter Four—Vision

Dealing with personal passions, and how those will develop into vision was the theme of Chapter four. Participant D wrestled with what his contributions actually were and what he may want them to be. Looking at the motives behind the passion were an

¹⁷ Participant I, e-mail message to author, July 29, 2017.

¹⁸ Participant G, e-mail message to author, July 30, 2017.

important conclusion for him. He said, “It just brings out the importance of letting God guide my life decisions.”¹⁹

This chapter caught a lot of the young officers off guard, and truthfully, was a bit intimidating to those who wouldn’t consider themselves “vision people.” Participant A responded honestly when she said, “I recognize that I am hard wired to be a details person, and the vision side of things is often too much for me to touch. I just want someone else to cover that part, and I’ll help you get there. That being said...I want to know where I’m going and what God is calling me towards!”²⁰ Many were relieved to know that this wasn’t necessarily a vision that was lifelong and overarching (though it may be), but could speak to their current appointment or current season of life. Participant A could more easily come up with a vision for her young family and for her current role as corps officer.

Chapter Five—Mission

Chapter five started to pursue individual mission, which was enlightening to the young officers in the study. Participant J really felt the chapter helping her grow in confidence about what God had in place for her individual life’s mission. She says,

Confidence doesn’t come easy to me. It’s no secret. I have struggled with it all of my life. However, when [my husband] and I arrived at our new appointment, I found myself eager to find a purpose and to be useful in the corps.

In the beginning of this chapter, the words that struck chords with me were “The specific purposes God invites you to fulfill in this season of life.” I don’t know exactly why what had happened, has happened, but this

¹⁹ Participant D, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

²⁰ Participant A, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2017.

reading helped me identify one of [my] purposes right now...over time God has given me the confidence I've needed within my own personal ministry. This chapter has helped me identify some confidence within myself I didn't even know that I had.²¹

Another participant expressed excitement over discovering his individual mission. Something didn't resonate with only having a common mission and the personalization of the mission finding was exceptionally helpful to him. "Macchia brought a great amount of encouragement to me in the Biblical reflection, as he talked about [discerning] God's leading in our individual mission."²² Participant I went on to speak about the joint mission of The Salvation Army, which he felt called to as well, but felt his own personal mission could delve deeper into what God's intention for him could be. "God's individual mission for each and every one of us is so much deeper than what meets the eye. Knowing this, and with reiterating what Macchia had explained, we must pray for our individual mission constantly, in order to visualize the applicable tasks that God has entrusted to us."²³ Participant I explained that this was his favorite chapter thus far because of the clear indication that God was preparing him individually as well as corporately. "Macchia reminded me that through prayerful discernment, my primary mission is to focus far less on what needs to be changed in the world around me, and more so on what needs to be changed in me; and my attitudes (transforming of my mind). In doing so, I'll have a clear understanding of my role in His story."²⁴ Understandably, this revelation of an individual mission is novel in the lives of those committed to

²¹ Participant J, e-mail message to author, August 13, 2017.

²² Participant I, e-mail message to author, August 20, 2017.

²³ Participant I, e-mail message to author, August 20, 2017.

²⁴ Participant I, e-mail message to author, August 20, 2017.

community in The Salvation Army. The discovery that they did not have to choose one over the other, but that both the community mission and the individual mission can be used together for God's perfect purpose in one's life was profound. It was important to Participant M that nothing get in the way of his God-given mission. That if "God puts in my heart to help, I am going to figure out a way."²⁵ Each realization along this line will help in the prioritization of what is most important. The daily seeking after God was crucial to Participant D's journey of mission discovery. He said, "The fact that I don't know exactly what my lifelong contributions are going to be isn't as important as just continually seeking after him."²⁶ Encouragement from the section on Paul's mission was noted and Participant G was especially touched by it. "I love how no matter what mission Paul was after he went at it whole heartedly and gave it his all, succeeding at it; good or bad. This is a character trait I want, as I consider my mission I want the drive and passion of Paul. I want to be that humble servant who stops at nothing to do what it is I've been called to do."²⁷

Chapter Six—Time

This chapter circled back around to the first questions asked in the pre-project interview about time given to God for spiritual growth and development. Participant J admitted, "Some days are busier than others and I would be lying if I said every day at the same exact time I spend with the Lord. Some days are harder than others. But what a challenge and inspiration it was to read that some stop seven times a day...I thought,

²⁵ Participant M, e-mail message to author, September 23, 2017.

²⁶ Participant D, e-mail message to author, September 27, 2017.

²⁷ Participant G, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

‘how much better would my day be? How much more productive?’”²⁸ Again, seeing the value and necessity of time spent with God, but not necessarily meeting the mark there.

Participant D knew just what was coming at the mere title of the chapter:

When I saw the title for Chapter 6, I knew exactly what the consensus of the chapter was going to be. We need to take time to be with God. This is something that I have heard over and over again throughout my life. Every time I hear it, I tell myself that I need to change and that I need to be better in this area of my Christian walk. And every time, it lasts 2-3 days before I am back into my normal routine. It makes me worried because I see officer and Christian friends falling away from Christ and, while I don’t know for sure, I bet most of them didn’t have a consistent quiet time with God.²⁹

More from Participant I was said on the need for a vibrant and regular prayer life. He says, “Macchia reminded me that in order to gain a solid understanding of what my personal mission is, I need to have a solid understanding of how imperative and urgent my time is with him. So moving forward, I’m going to throw a sense of urgency into my prayer life.”³⁰

Chapter Seven—Trust

Chapter seven had participants examine their relational priorities—who God might be calling them to, and perhaps the time that is necessary to cultivate those relationships. Participant O reflected on this chapter, “It made me think of some Army friends who I always assume are Christian and have a great walk. That’s a foolish assumption of me. Chapter seven made me reflect on my relational priorities in a most

²⁸ Participant J, e-mail message to author, August 24, 2017.

²⁹ Participant D, e-mail message to author, October 2, 2017.

³⁰ Participant I, e-mail message to author, August 24, 2017.

positive way.”³¹ Participant I found the relationship traits important to consider in his own relationships:

Coming from an upbringing where I felt I had no reason to trust anyone around me, I often find it difficult to carry out some of the healthy relationship traits that Macchia lists in the Biblical Reflection. Especially in these past few months, I’ve had to be very intentional about being honest and transparent in my close relationships.

From my experience, I’ve found that God will most often use the relationships in my life, to reveal himself to me. Whether he’s looking to affirm, direct, encourage, or even discipline me; I can often count on my close friends to be God’s voice throughout my journey.³²

It was interesting to note that Participant L sought to examine relationships feeding into him rather than those he was giving out.³³ It is an important distinction to examine both sides of our relationships. Participant O examined trust relationships from both sides, “[Chapter 7] made me reflect on the importance of trusting people. And, the power of ‘trusting’ people as well as the imperative for myself to be trustworthy.”³⁴

Participant J reflected on her own relationships in times of trouble as the chapter highlighted the character of Ruth and her relationships. “I am reminded of those that stood by my side during a dark time. The friends that kept me company when I was afraid to be alone.”³⁵ Similarly, Participant P felt that it challenged her own intentionality with relationships she encountered daily.³⁶

³¹ Participant O, e-mail message to author, August 29, 2017.

³² Participant I, e-mail message to author, August 29, 2017.

³³ Participant L, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

³⁴ Participant O, e-mail message to author, August 29, 2017.

³⁵ Participant J, e-mail message to author, September 24, 2017.

³⁶ Participant P, e-mail message to author, October 16, 2017.

Chapter Eight—Temple

Temple reflections on physical priorities had some officers rushing to the gym, but most took a more reflective approach to the *why* of this priority.

Participant I reflected on the temple analogy as follows:

When reading this chapter, I was reminded of the sense that God gave me complete dominion over my body. I can assume that he also gave me the power to choose how nice his lodging situation (my body) will be while He lives in me...Lately, Jesus' lodging situation has been looking like a rundown Days Inn that badly needs a gym equipment room and less soda/vending machines (my current situation). Jesus deserves so much better of a lodging situation than this! Jesus deserves nothing less than the Four Seasons—Presidential Suite! Luckily, the text gave me some applicable ways to make this renovation possible.³⁷

Making the connection to their journey of faith stood out for Participant G. She said it was a good reminder and that she often forgets, “[t]hat my body is a temple and that healthy living and proper care for my mind, body, and soul are evidence of my faith walk.”³⁸ Some others, like Participant K were helped by the “R” suggestions in the chapter (rest your body, replenish your body, release your body).³⁹ She says, “I definitely like the suggestion of taking your allotted vacation!”⁴⁰ Participant J was helped by the releasing your body portion. She reflects, “This part spoke volumes to be...we should keep ourselves accountable by caring for our soul first and, in fact, ‘release’ any unhealthy temptations over to the Lord.”⁴¹

³⁷ Participant I, e-mail message to author, September 23, 2017.

³⁸ Participant G, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2017.

³⁹ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 107-108.

⁴⁰ Participant K, e-mail message to author, September 26, 2017.

⁴¹ Participant J, e-mail message to author, September 24, 2017.

Chapter Nine—Treasure

Chapter nine tackled the importance of our financial priorities and the correlation between our relationship with God and our stewardship. Participant I reflected on this by saying, “All throughout this chapter, Macchia challenged me to think outside the box—with regards to stewardship. This chapter suggested that it’s truly a measurement, as stewardship can most often be a direct reflection of where we’re at, with regards to our relationship with God.”⁴² Participant J found this chapter perspective-altering for her:

This chapter shines a light on knowing that what you have now are only “things.” We always need to focus on what really matters and not be so attached to worldly possessions and always be turning our eyes to God and His kingdom. The scriptures in this chapter point to getting our priorities right and remind us to pay attention to what we spend our time doing and what we spend our money on. Not only how much money we spend, but where are we putting it and what good will it do?⁴³

Chapter Ten—Talent

Chapter ten focused on adhering to the mission and putting your gifting in place to focus in on the mission that God has given. Participant J drew much encouragement from the example given of Noah and his perseverance. It helped her realize that she needs to be mission-ready and available at all times and stay true to the task God has given her.⁴⁴ This focus aspect was important to Participant I as well. He drew attention to Macchia’s line from the book, “God’s invitation becomes clearer as you get closer to His heart.”⁴⁵ He felt that the whole Rule of Life process could be summed up in this

⁴² Participant I, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

⁴³ Participant J, e-mail message to author, September 29, 2017.

⁴⁴ Participant J, e-mail message to author, September 29, 2017.

⁴⁵ Macchia, *Crafting a Rule of Life*, 132.

statement.⁴⁶ Participant I draws from the examples of Noah and Fanny Crosby from the book when he states, “Both of their stories support the evidence that God is most often calling us into missions which will affect eternity. When our focus is strong, we see the opportunities to change eternity for His purpose and plan.”⁴⁷

Again from the example of Noah, Participant C concludes that the calling we have is specific. She says:

What stood out to me was that God’s calling on Noah is that it was specific! While we all have a calling to follow Christ and serve the body of Christ, my calling to serve God is specific. And from the examples in scripture it won’t always be—and definitely isn’t for me—something that I am naturally gifted or equipped for. It requires a complete reliance on God’s spirit to fill and flow out of me to accomplish the mission. At the end of the chapter when it asks to re-evaluate your personal mission statement to make sure it fits with where I am and what I am doing now it led me to focus more on developing my spiritual gifts and challenging others to do the same.

Rule of Life Implementation

Crafting their personal Rule of Life was an enriching and oftentimes difficult process for the participants. Participant A realized the incredible amount of discipline required as a Salvation Army officer in general, and to call into place a Rule of Life could prove overwhelming if we do not release those things we are doing that are not a part of our self-determined Rule of Life. She says,

In doing this I am reminded what an incredible amount of discipline is required by a Salvation Army officer in the climate we work in today if we want to stay true to our Rule of Life. Like, *so* much discipline! I don’t think we grasp the reality in the slightest when we sign up for

⁴⁶ Participant I, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

⁴⁷ Participant I, e-mail message to author, September 25, 2017.

[officership]. And it's a helpful thought that we tend to want to do it all—and it is a tough realization that we can't possibly manage that.⁴⁸

Participant P explains, “The Rule of Life chart was incredibly difficult for me. Mainly because I tend to think about a lot and in turn, want to do it all in one go, I spend a lot of time typing and then erasing as I felt, as always, that I can overwhelm my priorities.”⁴⁹ And that priority-making was key in making a Rule of Life for the participants. “Not to overwhelm” those priorities as Participant “P” put it, was life-giving to most participants.

Post-Project Interview

The post-project interview was conducted through email after the participants had implemented their Rule of Life for 3-5 weeks. The questions asked were focused in on the success of implementation and the differences detected in priority, time, and the worthwhile nature of the process. The following questions directed to that end were asked of each participant after they had undergone 3-5 weeks of implementation:

1. Were you able to complete the Rule of Life material and implement into your life?
2. How long and how has the implementation gone?
3. Do you feel more/less/the same attention is given to priority roles since implementation?
4. Describe any major differences in priorities, time management, task accomplishment since implementation?
5. Describe the quality of your devotional life since implementation. Any major differences?

⁴⁸ Participant A, e-mail message to author, October 12, 2017.

⁴⁹ Participant P, e-mail message to author, October 16, 2017.

6. Would you recommend this process for Salvation Army Officers? If so, when in their officership (i.e. Training School, 1st year, 5 year checkpoint, etc.

The participants' full post-project interviews can be found in Appendix 3, however, some of the findings will be included here. Some analysis follows, but since much of the responses fall into the future question, "So what now?" most of the interpretation of what their responses mean for the future will be included in the next chapter.

Table 4: Responses to Post-Project Interview Question 3⁵⁰

Do you feel more/less/the same attention is given to priority roles since implementation?																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
More	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Less																
The Same							X								X	

With the exception of two, all the participants expressed a positive change in the amount of attention given to their priority roles determined by their personal Rule of Life. Many spoke specifically about the intentionality that accompanied implementation. The process often made them stop and evaluate roles and relationships—thus giving more attention to that area in their everyday life. Many noticed the act of slowing and even stopping in order to notice roles, relationships, and tasks. Even if they went on with it, they were noticing an intentional pause they had added to the process as they implemented their Rule of Life.

⁵⁰ Full Post-Project Interview Questions and Responses in Appendix 3

Table 5: Responses to Post-Project Interview Question 4

Describe major differences in: priorities, time, task accomplishment																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Expressed Difference in Priority	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Expressed Difference in Time	X	X	X		X	X			X	X			X	X		X
Expressed Difference in Task	X	X				X				X						X
Expressed No Differences				X											X	

This question delved a little deeper into the changes that were observed during implementation. Participants mostly saw changes in their priorities and specifically in their relationships. Many were surprised at how little attention was given to their highest priority relationships, and the opposite was also true. Many described the process of reorganizing the amount of time and attention that were given to those relationships that were not priorities. Just two expressed no or little change in this area. The noticing, evaluating, and addressing those areas and roles that were not receiving the proper attention (whether too much or too little) was a profound discovery—and an important outcome of this project.

Table 6: Responses to Post-Project Interview Question 6

Would you Recommend this process for Officers? If so, When?																
Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
Yes	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
No																
Training	X	X		X		X	X		X			X	X		X	X
1 st Year					X				X	X	X			X		
5 th Year		X	X	X	X				X	X						X
Other Time					X	X		X								

Each participant expressed that this process would be a good one for officers/cadets to undergo. Interestingly, most felt that the Training School would be a good place to teach the Rule of Life. However, of those who mentioned the Training School—most said that a follow up would be most helpful at another mark down the road—one, three or five years. They thought learning the process in Training would be helpful, but implementation on the field would be the real test of the priorities set.

The next chapter will delve deeper into the comparison between the pre-project and post-project interviews and the impact they had on the officer participants. It will also look ahead at how this study might influence other officers and the future for officers hoping to use the project to help them discover how... *to love and serve him supremely all my days.*

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Pre-Project Answers to: “Has a set aside ‘quiet time’ been a struggle?”

Compared to Post-Project Answers to: “Describe the quality of your devotional life since implementation [of Rule of Life]”

“It has been a struggle, honestly. I can give a thousand excuses why: my children, tiredness, corps duties, but it is truly the biggest struggle and is my greatest conviction.”

“There is a higher quality and level of enjoyment for sure as I look forward to that dedicated time set aside.”—Participant A

“In my heart I know that this time is so much more important than anything else I have going on. But in my head all I can think about is the reports due, programs that need planning, people I haven't called, the list goes on and on. And then I feel like things wouldn't be so overwhelming if I would just spend the time with God. But the cycle keeps going.”

“I've seen a great improvement in my devotional life. Rather than just studying for sermon prep, I've been in God's Word for myself.”—Participant E

“Very much so. There are so many things that occupy my mind...I find myself choosing to forgo my quiet time”

“Because of the increased frequency, I have felt that the length and depth of my devotional life has grown through this process.”—Participant D

“There have been many times where my devotional time has been a struggle. However, I've realized more and more that without my devotional time, I am absolutely miserable. Whether I remember what was taught to me or not. It is the fact that I am resting in his presence that gets me through whatever I endure.”

“My devotional life has found more structure, which has ultimately led to improvements. My perspective and outlook on life has been predominately healthy.”—Participant I

“I have tried to find a good time for this and honestly I am failing miserably. I feel convicted every day that I need to make this a priority and set a time that I absolutely will not allow to be interrupted or completely neglected. Since starting officership, to be embarrassingly honest, I have really neglected my personal devotions.”

“I have now been in the Word for 61 straight days. It has hurt my heart to see how easy we let our relationship with God go while trying to show others how to strengthen theirs. Seems pretty ironic. I have to be the example, and I need His Word to keep me going and filled so that I have enough to offer others.”—Participant G

Introduction

Looking back to The Salvation Army Covenant, and specifically to that first desire “to love and serve him supremely all my days,”¹ we can find the officer participants in a more intentional process of doing just that since implementation of their Rule of Life. They have read the Rule of Life teaching, they have crafted their own individual Rule, and are implementing it into their daily lives. “All my days” takes on a more significant meaning as they process what that looks like each and every day. This being the first and foremost commitment of the Officer’s Covenant was once again brought to the forefront of the young officer’s mind and heart. They made intentional plans to keep this the priority of their lives. It takes a daily discipline and accountability to uphold the covenant of an individual Rule of Life, and this isn’t easy. Given the different personalities and gifts of the individual officers, it was extremely hard in some cases. The outcomes were overall positive in terms of the new and consistent attention given to meaningful priorities.

The thesis-project brought each of the officers through the process of targeting in on priorities: spiritual, relational, personal and professional. They then stopped and evaluated each one, in terms of where they currently were, the shortfalls experienced, and the re-prioritization needed. Each participant then created the action plan of a Rule of Life to pursue the priority of loving and serving God supremely each of their days in the context of The Salvation Army. This concluding chapter looks at the information and experience gained, how it was processed and implemented, and where that can be taken from here in the life of Salvation Army officers.

¹ The Salvation Army, “My Covenant,” accessed November 3, 2017, <https://www.salvationist.org/poverty.nsf>.

Discovery

Looking back to the hypothesis this thesis-project set out to test, it is possible to see some early results of the Rule of Life tool used for this process. To recap the hypothesis: *Officers in the ministry setting of The Salvation Army, with a ministry leader invested in helping them navigate their first appointment, and with an accountability tool based on their own commitments to God, could flourish sooner and more vibrantly in their ministry.*

The thesis-project went well, although it is understandably subjective as to how well it worked for each individual. It can be validated that it was a positive experience in priority establishment, and in most cases, re-establishment, however. The process involved accessing those priorities: stopping, evaluating, and re-organizing while applying self-discipline. What participants had been treating as the most important priority was hardly ever so, and all, to some extent, came away with a greater understanding of which priorities needed to be attended to more regularly, and which needed a lesser amount of attention. In the words of Participant E on the process, “It’s almost a re-wiring, reprioritizing actually, that is happening.”²

From the information gained in the thesis-project, the accountability tool can be validated—that of the *Crafting a Rule of Life* material. A huge takeaway was establishing priority relationships, as well as participating in a guilt-free validation of family life, Sabbath and devotional life. This was a major discovery in each officer’s life—that they needed to place the correct relationships in their appropriate places, giving the right balance of attention and care. Much of the initial stress in officership is the onslaught of needs and relationships that come at the officer each day. The accountability tool of a

² Full Post-Project Interview Questions and Responses in Appendix 3

Rule of Life was helpful for those that use it to prioritize time and care with the relationships and needs they are called to take care of.

The process of reading through the book on an individual basis and responding to the ministry leader was not validated in every case. Some learned very well in a mostly self-directed fashion and some did not. The process of communicating the material will need to be re-considered in any plan to move forward with the Rule of Life for Salvation Army officers. Some participants expressed the desire for teaching sessions, and face-to-face instruction. Being able to process the information with someone *as they learn it* was a desire that wasn't always accommodated through the email correspondence in this thesis-project.

The accountability of having a ministry leader follow along in the process was validated in each case. Very often, the ministry leader was able to guide to further study in a particular area of interest of the participant, leading to good devotional and spiritual discipline material, provide help with program aids, and administer spiritual gifts inventories and personality profiles. The goal in each case was to take the individual's needs in one particular area and equip them with aids to apply to their own situations. Most participants took advantage of the individual nature of the study and were appreciative of the personalized care as they went through the material.

Overall, it can be determined that the results of this study were validated by the post-project interviews, as compared to the pre-project interviews. The method of communicating the material was not always validated, but the process of having a ministry leader go through the process with the participant was. The resulting change of priorities and further attention paid to relationship with Christ in most cases confirmed

the validity of the project as a whole. Discussion of the impact of the study is included in the following section.

Impact

Impact on New Officers

The impact on the new officers was profound. Some experienced more change given the situation they were in at the beginning of the study. Some of those comparisons as they relate to devotional life were included at the beginning of this chapter. A few others will be specifically highlighted at this time. Participants found that they were more aware, and in most cases, gave more attention to, those roles they determined were priority roles. Participant C said this: “I feel as though I have been able to give more attention to my priority roles without guilt, whereas before I would feel the pressure to fill many roles that were not life giving or even necessary for my ministry.”³ Even the identification that the roles that they were giving the most time and attention to were not the ones they wanted to prioritize was a key discovery. Participant G said that the Rule of Life implementation “has been a reminder for me to keep God first and to remember that I’m not here to do it all on my own or to be everything to everyone.” Establishing the right priorities and allocating the proper time and attention given to them was felt in a real way by those that followed through in doing it. Participant C describes these differences:

So far the major difference I have noticed is my ability to say “no” to extra items and say “yes” to my family. Although we are still in the midst of a busy season, I have noticed a healthier amount of time being spent with my family, and [it is] quality time. I am not as stressed or wound so tightly

³ Full Post-Project Interview Questions and Responses in Appendix 3.

during our time together which enables me to actually enjoy it. This has been a blessing! I cannot believe that this is what I have been missing, and will keep with the Rule of Life to safeguard this precious gift.

Participant E put it this way of her own experience, “I’ve been able to put ‘the first things first.’ I’ve found that using the Rule of Life has helped me see where I’m wasting time on inconsequential things while not spending enough time doing the things that actually matter.”

One priority that was re-established by Participant A was that of Sabbath and rest. She says, “I have been sticking tightly to my weekly Sabbath day and making it a priority to rest, reset, and replenish. Commitment to those items has given me a clearer vision and strength for the work ahead at the corps and for my family.” She was not the only participant to notice a change in this area of Sabbath rest, as it was an area many felt in need of prioritization. The word often used by the participants was being more “intentional.” They had varying priorities and people to be intentional with, but the Rule of Life seemed to impact their everyday intention about what mattered most to them. Participant P said, “I think I have been more intentional. That’s the biggest difference. I have been more intentional which means I am learning to focus more on those areas of my life.” Not surprisingly, impact was seen among these new officers mostly in the areas that they intentionally focused on.

Impact for Officers in Varying Stages of Ministry

The impact for those in similar situations, in this case officers or cadets not in their first three years of ministry, looks very different. This issue was discussed by the participants in relation to the interview question, “Would you recommend this process for

Salvation Army Officers? If so, when in their officership?” Most thought that the pivotal time for this Rule of Life to be constructed would be the Training process—before officers enter the field. This would be the time where personal priorities and schedules are established and most participants thought this is where it could have the most impact. Many said that a type of refresher of this process would be helpful around the five-year mark. Participant B summed up what many were saying: “This could be a good process to go over in Spiritual Formation Groups at the Training School, and then it would be good to revisit the material every couple years as part of the review process. A more thorough focus of this in the 5th year review could be helpful.”

Trying to go through this process with officers who have been in ministry for a long time might have an even greater impact, because there has been more time for faulty priorities to take hold. However, it could be more difficult to make the adjustments necessary with those who have been going the same direction for a long time. There was more resistance in those officers of three years than in those of less than one. There was greater impact on those able to reprioritize at that time, but less were fully able to make the changes necessary to feel the greater impact. Officers encounter so much on a daily basis and many have learned a way of coping with what comes at them, but many have not. It may be most helpful to teach this Rule of Life process to those just establishing their way of fulfilling their officer’s covenant to love and serve God supremely each day, and then, as mentioned by many participants, to check and recheck the process every so often throughout their ministry career.

Looking Ahead

Suggestions for the Future

Though some were able to go through the book at their own pace and keep accountable with a little guidance, most participants needed more instruction in the material. Many of the suggestions concerning the future of this teaching were that it be taught and talked through by the participant in a face-to-face instruction atmosphere. When giving these suggestions, most participants identified The School for Officer's Training as the place where the Rule of Life instruction should first be taught. Participant G stated, "I think this would make a good class or elective in Training. It isn't as easy to implement once you're already in the craziness of life as an officer. Having these clear goals and priorities on paper and in mind up front would have been a great tool to avoid many mistakes we have already made."⁴ Although most participants believed the Training School was where it should be taught and where the individual can start to identify the priorities needed for a productive and balanced officership, they also thought it would lack the true test of responsibilities encountered in officership. Most participants concluded that there should be further instruction or touchpoints later in ministry—perhaps every three to five years.

The format that may be best is to have the Rule of Life instruction given in the Training School, where cadets can begin to craft their individual Rule of Life and then follow through with ministry leaders on the field in the review process. This process would have another positive outcome in that the ministry leader (Area Commander or Divisional Commander) would have a better understanding of the officer's passions and

⁴ Full Post-Project Interview Questions and Responses in Appendix 3

areas of commitment and concern. If the individual officer's Rule of Life was reviewed in this annual process, it may open communication with field leaders in a most positive way. Also, the individualized Rule of Life is a ready-made discussion starter for the leader and officer. It offers a better understanding of the officer's goals, achievements, time-management strategies and relationships. This is much needed information for both the officer and a leader poised to help and encourage the officers in their command.

More Than a Writing Exercise

The Rule of Life project for young officers was a positive experience for the participants involved. Not all of the structure appealed to every one of their preferences, but it taught them a good deal about where their time was going, what relationships took priority in both energy and time, and it helped them see what it means to love and serve God supremely each and every day. There was great satisfaction in completing a Rule of Life for the participants and that sense of accomplishment was reflected in their post-project interviews. The participants ultimately realized that it wasn't just having this final product of a Rule of Life, but it was an intentional living it out attitude that was most important. So much so, many suggested ways to make this happen earlier (in Training School) and then revisited with leadership every year or so. However, it is more than just writing it down, it is about living it out. More than just knowing their Rule of Life is now written down, they must access it daily and live it out for it to be effective.

I add a personal illustration of this point: in my daughter Emma's first grade class they allowed each student to hang on a wall entitled "I'm proud of *me*," one item of work (test, artwork, letter) that they were particularly proud of. Upon entering her classroom

for an open house, I looked for Emma's "I'm proud of *Me*" piece of work. The following is what I found:

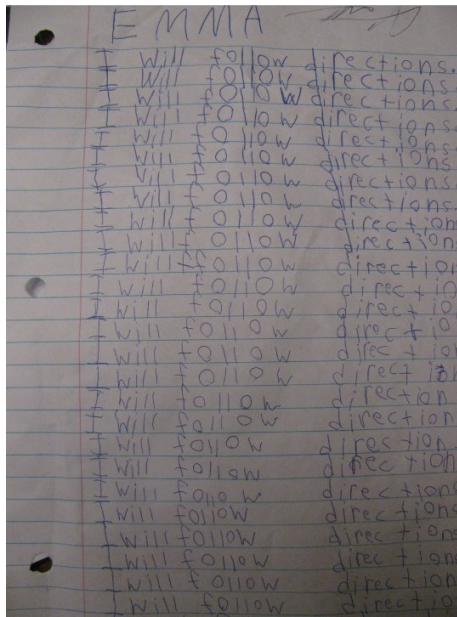


Figure 1. Emma's "I'm Proud of *Me*" submission

I can still feel the embarrassment of the situation. Why would she choose this discipline exercise to display? I didn't even remember the situation that produced this piece of work. I asked her later (because in front of everyone else, I was going to pretend this didn't belong to her) why was she proud of this paper? And she said, "Since I had to write this over and over again, I decided to work on my handwriting. And I am really proud of my pretty handwriting." I made sure she understood that the goal of that assignment was to remember to follow directions, and not to work on her handwriting—however pretty!

It takes more than just "writing it down." It is more than a written Rule of Life. It is a change of a life, a re-prioritization, a daily striving to live a life pleasing to God and with the ultimate goal...to love and serve him supremely all of my days. The participants

in this thesis-project know that the Rule of Life chart is not the final goal, but a jumping off point for the rest of their officership. It is more than a written covenant, but one that has been prayed over, and one that is a discovery of longings and passions that are God ordained. What if in the days ahead this thesis-project could serve as a catalyst of change for Salvation Army Officers in the Southern Territory?

The Days Ahead

Where can this thesis-project have the most impact? Perhaps the Training College will be able to use this research to help those preparing for work on the field. Maybe, as the participants expressed, there can be refresher courses along the way in their ministry reviews. Perhaps it can be used as guidance for officer annual reviews. There are many places in Salvation Army structure where this thesis-project can be submitted and perhaps make a difference. Where this author believes it will be most useful is in groups of officers reflecting together over the material at Officers' Councils,⁵ where field officers of all lengths of experience share and take in the information, change their priorities, sharpen their tools of ministry, reflect on their relationships, and focus in on their mission and vision. Having groups with well-experienced veterans on the field working alongside those fresh to the battle is perhaps where the most can be gained. Officers can learn from each other in the process of crafting a Rule of Life and can help spur each another on in discovering their individual giftings and passions.

In this type of community setting, the Rule of Life instruction can be heard away from the distraction and noise of field ministry. It can be given real time to delve into

⁵ Officers' Councils in The Salvation Army Southern Territory are held by division twice a year. They are a gathering of all officers of the division for spiritual reflection and retreat.

deep issues that the officer has experienced and is currently going through. In the community of Officers' Councils, all types of testimonies could be shared and learned from. Those who have fought the battle of busyness and relationship sacrificing can already speak directly to those who have not yet come into contact with that temptation. The experiences of one's officer peers would be a vital ground for developing an individual Rule of Life in each other. Field officer divisional leaders would also be accessible in this setting, and could both help with and learn from what their officers are going through, what their passions are, and where their relationships are faltering and are in need of assistance. The future of this instruction and guidance for a Rule of Life is both exciting and crucial. Having already seen the potential demonstrated by the sixteen new Rule of Life keepers, I can imagine what heartache might have been spared in their future officership. Putting this option on the field, whether it is adopted by everyone or not, is a game changer for how The Salvation Army system could work. We, as Salvation Army officers, could be more transparent with one another. We could be more focused on what and who specifically God is leading us to, and we could recognize that although we cannot do it all, we can do a great deal of good in his Name as we watch carefully for where he leads us.

From Experience with Hope

It is exciting to see that the future of these young officers may be positively influenced for good through the practice that they have been through. Many officers of older generations have learned the same lessons, and been through the same reprioritization—learning the hard way after many years of less vibrant ministry. From

this author's experience, it took about ten years of ministry before there was a stopping point. It was a point that was alarming because the first love of a relationship with Christ was not being pursued daily. The desire to "love and serve him supremely" was sometimes eclipsed by the onslaught of ministry needs and desires. One day, ten years into ministry, Jesus led my devotional life into a deeper relationship. Nothing has ever been the same. Because when that kind of love—the love that the Savior has for each of his children—is really experienced, we know where to look for it again. The practice of spiritual disciplines is just that—going back to the places where we have met our love before through prayers, Scripture and meditation. It is a practice that this officer found and will never let go of again because the love of God now rules supremely. Nothing comes before it, and nothing can replace it. When other things creep in and take the focus away from him, I remember those early days of exhaustion, life-draining ministry and know that he's made me unique for his ministry and that ministry is specific to me. I'm a better Salvation Army officer because of it. I am more passionate, grace giving and forgiving, because I'm putting my priorities where they should be.

A gift I asked for when leaving my last congregation was a Salvation Army songbook, the organization's hymnal, signed with each of the congregant's favorite song. This particular congregation was comprised mostly of retired Salvation Army officers. What experiences they had! What wisdom they shared! So much of what they had learned throughout their decades of ministry was then contained in that songbook. Surprisingly to this author, it wasn't the war songs of The Salvation Army that had the

most signatures and notes of encouragement.⁶ Although always useful for gearing up for battle against sin and shame and remembering The Salvation Army covenant to lead others out of darkness to eternal light, these songs were not the one these seasoned veterans pointed out. Highlighted most often were refrains such as: “Lord, with my all I part. Closer to thee I’ll cling. All early things that bind my heart, Dear Lord, to thy feet I bring.”⁷ Two particularly meaningful stanzas were penned by Salvation Army General Albert Orsborn and signed by many Salvation Army heroes as a testimony to their meaning in their lives. The meaning almost leapt off the page concerning what they had come through and experienced, and where their hearts remained, clinging first and foremost to the Savior. They are as follows:

Thy name is joined with mine
By every human tie,
And my new name is thine,
A child of God am I;
And never more alone, since thou
Art on the road beside me now.

Beside thee as I walk
I will delight in thee,
In sweet communion talk
Of all thou art to me;
The beauty of thy face behold
And know thy mercies manifold⁸

Out of the wealth of experience of these retired officers, their relationship with the Savior was the main thing. Cultivating it, loving him through service to others, through

⁶ The “warfare” section of the songbook has battle songs for soldiers and officers at war against sin and shame in the world: “God’s Soldier,” “Marching on in the Light of God,” “Ever is the War Cry, Victory!” just to name a few.

⁷ Alice Georgina Edwards, “Lord, With my All I Part,” No. 523 in *The Songbook of the Salvation Army* (Alexandria, VA: Salvation Army Supplies, Print. and Pub., 2015), 145.

⁸ Albert Orsborn, “I Know Thee Who Thou Art,” No. 59 in *The Songbook of the Salvation Army*, 17.

prayer, through clinging to the grace he provides—this was what those retired officers wanted to leave as a legacy to the future. The other things fade, but Christ is all.

The first few years are a turning point in officership. The participants in this study were floundering with their devotional life by the first year. This thesis-project cut into their coping mechanisms with hard questions, and the harsh realities of the relationship status with their Savior, their family and ministry, and sometimes with themselves. Reprioritizing was key and what they were left with was a more organized approach to their daily ministry. They will not wander aimlessly when they access the Rule of Life they created. They will not wonder if what is pulling them away from Christ is the most important. It can't be. What this thesis-project has done is set sixteen officers on an individualized mission to love and serve him with their own mission and calling through the ministry of The Salvation Army. They are laser focused on what they are set in the field to do and have a daily plan of action to do just that. Perhaps they can learn sooner without the painful years of life-draining busyness. Maybe they can love and serve him supremely all of their days and pass on their passion to their peers and to those who follow. From this small group, big changes are in store for The Salvation Army. They will watch these officers turn into maturely-focused officers *who are also* great husbands and daughters, PTA members and community advocates, stage performers and passionate preachers. They have put Jesus first, but have not forgotten their own vision and mission that God has given them, and they have not forgotten their passion and relationships that he has placed in their care. They have learned how to love and serve him supremely through crafting an individual Rule of Life. And they, like this author, are excited and

determined to follow Jesus, closely surrounded by an Army intent with a first and foremost mission...*to love and serve him supremely all my days.*

APPENDIX 1

PARTICIPANTS

- Participant A:** Married female, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant B:** Married male, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant C:** Married female, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant D:** Married male, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant E:** Married female, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant F:** Married male, with children, in 3rd year of officership, not a longtime Salvationist (<10 years)
- Participant G:** Married female, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (+10 years)
- Participant H:** Married male, with children, in 3rd year of officership, longtime Salvationist (10+ years)
- Participant I:** Married male, no children, in 3rd year of officership, not a longtime salvationist (<10 years)
- Participant J:** Married female, no children, in 1st year of officership, not a longtime salvationist (<10 years)
- Participant K:** Married female, with children, in 2nd year of officership, longtime salvationist (+10 years)
- Participant L:** Married male, with children, in 2nd year of officership, not a longtime Salvationist (<10 years)
- Participant M:** Married male, no children, in 1st year of officership, not a longtime Salvationist (<10 years)
- Participant N:** Married female, no children, in 1st year of officership, longtime Salvationist (+10 years)
- Participant O:** Married male, with children, in 1st year of officership, longtime Salvationist (+10 years)
- Participant P:** Married female, with children, in 1st year of officership, longtime Salvationist (+10 years)

APPENDIX 2

PRE-PROJECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Do you have a set aside “quiet time?” When is it? Where is it? What does it consist of?

Participant A: I do not have a regularly scheduled quiet time, and there have been many days missed in between. I take each day as it comes, and sometimes it happens early in the morning or in the early evening before my kids come home. Sometimes it doesn't happen at all. I find it very difficult to do a true quiet time if my children are home—always asking “What are they doing? Who's crying? What was that sound?” I also find it difficult to do it at the office. The “to do” list doesn't stop in my mind at the office. I do best at home by myself or when everyone is sleeping.

Participant B: In theory, yes. In reality, not really. I try to wake up around 5 with the intention of having a quiet time first thing. Sometimes this doesn't happen but for the most part I am up early. I'm usually able to get a little bit in and then one of the [kids] usually wakes up crazy early.

Participant C: My quiet time happens in the morning after I have gotten myself ready, and is accompanied by a light, uncomplicated breakfast so that I can focus on the devotional. I am currently reading through a devotional book entitled “Moments with the Savior” by Ken Gire. It has a portion of scripture from one of the gospels, a solid biblical exegesis, and a simple prayer at the end. I usually add to the prayer any concerns I have for the day ahead, or if I am reminded about someone I know by the story read that morning I will lift them up also.

Participant D: I don't have a set time that I use every day. It seems to vary between home and the office. The sometimes mean that I miss days. It mostly consists of reading a book of some type.

Participant E: I have had every INTENTION of having “quiet time.” When we first got to our appointment I would sit at my desk before I got started with work and read and pray. But the more hectic things go the more and more I didn't have time. It's so hard. There are always a hundred reasons not to spend time in God's word.

Participant F: Basically, my only quiet time happens when I purposefully and intentionally make it happen. My “quiet time” is usually in the mornings and when I first arrive to the office (IF I am successful at warding off everyone else's “emergencies”) for about 7-19 minutes.

Participant G: I have tried to find a good time for this and honestly I am failing miserably. I feel convicted every day that I need to make this a priority and set a time that I absolutely will not allow to be interrupted or completely neglected.

Participant H: I currently don't have a consistent quiet time. However, when I do it is during the time I take [my child] to the bus stop and prior to heading to the office. The most regular time of silence and quiet is usually prior to preaching or giving a devotional thought. The quiet time consists of me reading a passage of scripture from the devotional

book "Take Time to be Holy" and praying that God would allow me to live out the application of it. I also spend time in silence to calm myself and prepare for the delivery. Participant I: Ever since I found the Lord, I always have enjoyed spending my time with him while walking and listening to music, however with my current medical condition, I have had a hard time building up the energy to walk. I'm not a morning person at all. In which case, I rarely do my "quiet time" before 12pm. I have found lately that the best time for me to have my time with God is at night, after [my wife] has gone to bed. Almost always, [she] goes to bed before me because she has to wake up early for her work detail. This leaves me with about 2 hours each night to read whatever literature I want to read/or have my time of quietness on my recliner.

Participant J: My set aside quiet time is usually in the mornings after I have taken the [dog out]. I come in get his breakfast settled and I sit down with a cup of coffee. So far it's lasted about 20 minutes till I need to get up and start getting ready. Then usually I get some reading done before I go to bed at night as well. Right now it is from one of Max Lucado's devotional books and it has a section for journaling as well.

Participant K: My quiet time has always typically been in the morning, however this has not been very consistent recently. When my quiet time does happen, I like to sit out in our sunroom with a cup of coffee. I'd prefer to actually be outside because I've always felt a connection to God being outside in His creation, but [where I live] makes that impossible most of the time. I'll read from a devotional book or use something from an app on my phone. During Lent I used a devotional/Bible reading plan from the YouVersion Bible app. Someone recently told me about the iDisciple app so I've been finding devotionals on that as well.

Participant L: Yes. Usually 5-6 days a week I wake up between 5 and 5:30 to do personal study. It is in my office at home. I start with prayer, then read 1-3 chapters in a specific book (currently in Hebrews), then conclude by doing personal reading (some sort of thought-provoking book about God, or the book Shelley Bell tells me to read lol). Sometimes I switch it up, and only read my Bible, sometimes I read recovery literature, sometimes it's just Oswald Chambers (My Utmost For His Highest). I stay pretty structured but sometimes I just do what I feel like doing that morning. Either way, I get "quiet time" until about 7AM (that's when [our child] wakes up).

Participant M: I have never really done well with quiet time, it makes my mind race. I do seem to be getting better at it with reading because it keeps my mind focused.

Participant N: Somewhat. [My husband] and I do devotions every day together in the morning, and I normally read at night before bed. It could be as little as 15 minutes, but sometimes I can read for an hour. I like reading fiction, just-for-fun books then. We've been coming home for lunch, which has been a good time to relax. Nothing special here, I just like being away from the office and the information/people overload.

Participant O: My "quiet time" is typically in the mornings. Right now, we come in early to the office, and I have time in my office before things get going for the day. I am studying 1 and 2 Kings right now. I also love to read My Utmost nearly everyday as well as the gift your husband gave me last year, Handbook to Leadership. This time also consists of focused prayer.

Participant P: Preferably, quiet time is first thing in the morning before my son wakes up, anything after that is anything but quiet, ha. I usually find one comfy, corner chair to do all my readings on at home. It consists of scripture reading, answering questions and writing them down in a notebook, which is then followed by prayer.

2. Has this area been a struggle? Does it feel like it's something else to "get done"?

Participant A: It has been a struggle, honestly. I can give a thousand excuses why: my children, tiredness, corps duties, etc. With the season that I'm in right now with a family, it is truly the biggest struggle and is my greatest conviction.

Participant B: I certainly wish I had a more frequent and substantial quiet time. There are mornings when I wake up and crave it, and really look forward to getting that time in. That's generally when I don't have a whole lot of other work on my mind. When I'm going through a busy season and have a lot on my plate it can seem like a task I am trying to fit in.

Participant C: Recently it has been a struggle because I am not a morning person, so it already takes more effort for me to get it done. Also, we are preparing for the busiest season—so I have been rather exhausted lately. The only thing I want to do in the mornings is get a little bit more sleep. Sometimes I give into that temptation which sacrifices that quiet time that I realize later in the day that I desperately need.

Participant D: Very much so. There are so many things that occupy my mind and I find myself choosing to forgo my quiet time.

Participant E: In my heart I know that this time is so much more important than anything else I have going on. But in my head all I can think about is the reports due, programs that need planning, people I haven't called, the list goes on and on. And then I feel like things wouldn't be so overwhelming if I would just spend the time with God. But the cycle keeps going.

Participant F: Everything in me and everything around me balks at the notion of "sitting still", even for the smallest stretch of time. It seems the environment in which we live out our calling is a vacuum; the need will always exceed our abilities, resources, time, emotional wellbeing, sanity (lol)...In a sense, I feel obligated to have this quiet time with God because I know that if I do not, I will quickly find myself in a world of hurt with no lifeline. When I finally sit down to have my time with God, it's because in heart, I know that my ability to operate in "the vacuum" is contingent on my own constant reassurance of a hope that springs eternal, which comes only through communion with God who does not lie (Titus 1:2).

Participant G: Since starting officership, to be embarrassingly honest, I have really neglected my personal devotions. My plan was to use the first 30 minutes of my time in the office for prayer and devotion, but I have found that things meet me once I walk in the door and half way through the day (in the middle of busyness) I realize I didn't do it. Then I intend to do it in the evening instead, and by the time I get home, eat, get [my child] in bed, and relax, I go on to bed (once again realizing I haven't done it).

Participant H: At times it has been a struggle. Especially on the days when there are many items on the "checklist." It never feels like something else that has to "get done."

Instead it's more like something that I have failed to do...I guess I am trying to say that the time I don't give to devotions really impacts my day.

Participant I: There have been many times where my devotional time has been a struggle. However, I've realized more and more that without my devotional time, I am absolutely miserable. Whether I remember what was taught to me or not. It is the fact that I am resting in his presence that gets me through whatever I endure, and not so much the knowledge that I took away from it. When I was a cadet, there were times where I would go weeks without digging in the word for my own personal soul. I will never forget how dead I felt on those weeks and I thank God that I remember those feelings of emptiness and how I can easily fall back into that slump if I am not intentional.

Participant J: So far it has not been a struggle so it does not feel like something else to get done. However I am only on day 4 of officership, so I am quite certain it may be different in the future (haha!).

Participant K: Quiet time is definitely a struggle for me. When I became a mother, my whole routine and morning schedule was turned upside down. As a sleep deprived mom, my morning quiet time was difficult to find. When we finally got settled into our first appointment and our [child] started sleeping through the night, I was able to regain a more consistent quiet time. Unfortunately, when we took away the pacifier, our [child] now wakes up 30 minutes earlier which has thrown my schedule again. Although I know the importance of quiet time and my morning devotions, I do often feel like it's something else on my checklist for the day.

Participant L: No. To be honest, this is my most cherished time of the day. If I could I would stay locked in my office reading all morning.

Participant M: Yes, I do get into producer mode and that is part of it but my mind will also race with nonsense. If I don't keep my mind focused on one thing, then it will think about everything. Not relaxing at all. This stinks for an introvert who gets tired around a lot of people also.

Participant N: I'd like to incorporate more quiet time because I get drained by noise/people/etc. I used to have a good routine for alone time, but now I'm not sure how I'm going to incorporate it more into the daily routine. It doesn't feel like something I have to "get done" because I really need that time! It's something I crave, but I think it may be hard to keep it up.

Participant O: This area is getting better in my life, definitely now that I have more flexibility in my schedule.

Participant P: Recently, this has been a struggle as I have not been in my own home for four three weeks and have been dealing with [my child's] stomach bug followed by my own stomach bug. Before this however, I was really enjoying this time and would be accountable to a session mate of mine who would be reading the same things. I plan to start this back up again.

3. Are there any examples you can give on how your personal time has fed your ministry? (ex. Felt God speaking specifically about a subject and that subject was brought up through a client, family member, etc.)

Participant A: Yes, absolutely. We have had a lot shared, significant life experiences in our corps this year. Most recently there have been several people whose family members have passed away, including my grandfather. The portions of scripture or words of peace that the Lord has given me personally have been directly used in the lives of our corps people as I minister to them.

Participant B: I can't think of any unique examples. I'd say that personal time does feed into my ministry mostly because I generally have my sermon content on my mind while reading or praying so I'll often be led in a certain direction in my sermon based off of this time.

Participant C: Yes! Recently I read about Jesus' interaction with Mary and Martha. It spoke to me about my personal struggle with trying to get everything done on my "to do" list perfectly to the detriment of my pastoral ministry. I was reminded that God calls me first to "be" and then to "do". It has changed the way I look at my role as an officer. Yes, there are many things to be done, but when a member of our congregation is present in front of me, I, too, must be fully present and attentive in order to be able to minister, pastor, and counsel.

Participant D: No specific instances. But there are multiple people in my corps who hold onto things in their past and they negatively affect how they interact with people.

Participant E: None that I can think of at the moment

Participant F: Yes, our sermon series for a four week long series called, "He Leadeth Me" is a series focused on shepherding from a biblical context. At the same time, I was using a devotional book by Laniak called, "While Shepherds Watch Their Flock," which had a deep impact on me. We culminated our series by presenting the members of our congregation with our "Pastor's Pledge." On it were commitments we made that were shaped in part by the ideas presented in the material.

Participant G: [Many confirmation examples but all reveal participant's identity] Needless to say, we felt like God had planned our message and Sunday before we ever knew what we would do where we were even going. It was amazing how our personal study led us to begin our ministry with our new corps family exactly how God had intended and how [the corps] needed. I felt so confirmed in where we were placed and I don't doubt for one second ever that we aren't right where God appointed us.

Participant H: I have just finished the book of Colossians...what I have gained from it is that Christ is enough and he holds all things together. My corps people have been through a lot over the past year. So this book has really given me inspiration and words from which to offer them encouragement.

Participant I: This morning I gathered with [my spiritual formation group]. There is a book that we have to help guide our discussions, but we hardly ever use it. This morning we talked about the importance of forgiving ourselves for things that we have done in the past. Something that I have been spending a lot of time on in my personal studies in the Leviticus Law and how animal sacrifices relate to the perfect blood of Jesus. It's been quite an eye opening journey for me and it's changed the way I see what Jesus did for me on Calvary. Surprisingly, many of [the group] had little to no knowledge of how an animal sacrifice worked, let alone what it meant. I came to the realization that they don't

have a clear understanding of what Jesus did for them when he, the Lamb of God, sacrificed his blood, simply because they don't even understand the meaning of sacrifice. When I started explaining to them, just some of the process of being forgiven in the Old Testament, they were amazed. I love how God used what I thought was my own personal study, and used it to open the eyes of [my spiritual formation group].

Participant J: Well to be honest I was nervous about being sent to [our new appointment]. I let what other people told me get into my head and my heart. Now I know shouldn't of, because I had let what others had said were just lies that the enemy wanted me to believe. From that moment I had started to feel inadequate and that there was nothing that I could offer to this specific Corps in general. I had started to believe that my talents and gifts that God had given me would be of no use. Last week and this week God has slowly started to reveal to me that in fact that [we are] here for a purpose. These people need love right now and I know I can give that to them. In return I need that as well and in just this first week I have seen what a loving family this congregation actually is. I have already seen that there people have beautiful hearts and there is so much that I can learn from them in this time of healing in my journey.

Participant K: I can't recall anything specific right now, but I often find that my personal time with God helps me greatly when doing pastoral care, especially when it is an unexpected conversation.

Participant L: My quiet time has brought me inner peace and strength to face the daily demands of Officership. My morning time with God has helped me handle stress, anxiety, and fears that pertain to being in leadership in ministry. Every single morning I am able to lay down burdens, put on my armor, and get in tune with the Holy Spirit; this is something that is without a doubt felt and noticed throughout my day. Also, a lot of my teaching and preaching is birthed from my morning quiet time with God. (things He tells me, something I read, etc.)

Participant M: With me I find it works the other way. When I am keeping up with devotions and prayer and I get some alone time to watch tv, everything I watch turns into a sermon illustration or Bible lesson.

Participant N: When I get some good quiet time, whether it's reading for fun/Bible study time/or just doing something for myself, I feel like I'm more prepared and have the energy for the other important matters. When I get to be quiet, it recharges me. When I've been surrounded by prolonged stimuli and don't get a chance to get a break from it, it becomes very hard for me to give my best. Often, I am unfocused and become exhausted. Quiet time keeps me focused on what's important, and I do often feel God speaking when I am away from outside stimulus.

Participant O: I pray that Scripture is on the tip of my tongue, and by intentionally reading, I am able to use examples day to day.

Participant P: My personal time allows me to stop and reflect, something that I don't always take time to do. I feel that it gives me an opportunity to just sit and feel His presence which in turn really puts me on the right track for the day.

APPENDIX 3

POST-PROJECT INTERVIEWS AND RESPONSES

1. Were you able to complete the Rule of Life material and implement into your life?

Participant A: For the most part yes

Participant B: Yes I was able to complete the Rule of Life material and have attempted to implement it into my life.

Participant C: Yes

Participant D: Unfortunately, the answer is both yes and no. I've never been known for my discipline. It was often easy to slip back into my normal habits and operate the same way I normally do. It was mainly the daily activities that were affected.

Participant E: Yes. It was hard to get through the reading but I completed it. I have implemented it into my life.

Participant F: Yes, I have completed the material and begun implementing my Rule of Life

Participant G: I have to some degree. I have made changes to my devotional life and Sabbath taking I am still not intentionally having family time with the kids weekly, or date nights with [my husband]. There are parts of my Rule that I want to be very intentional about including after Kettle and Christmas is over, because I recognize this isn't the season. I recently made times of prayer a priority and I am using my morning and afternoon commute to pray for specific people and needs. I have already seen answered prayer, some pretty miraculous. It has really been a reminder for me to keep God first and to remember that I'm not here to do it all on my own or to be everything to everyone, that is HIS job and He is more than capable. I GET to be used by Him, even in a simple prayer.

Participant H: I was able to complete the summaries at the end of the chapters and the key questions provided. I have done well to spend some intentional time with the family. Additionally, I have done well to complete early time in the word to prepare for sermons. The intentionality of the Rule of Life is helpful in giving some focus. I have not been able to implement the entire rule...however, I think with some time, I should be able to.

Participant I: Being that Macchia was consistently intentional about offering different ways to apply this material to our lives, I can confidently say that my completed Rule of Life chart will always serve as a great tool for every aspect of my life.

Participant J: Some yes and there are some that were tougher for me with the goals I made for myself.

Participant K: Yes

Participant L: Yes I was

Participant M: Yes, and I really tried. It seems like everything else I try to change, it is something that needs to become habit. I talked about a lot of stuff I want to make sure I do and I did stick to some of it, but, when it comes to the things I want to do weekly or even monthly, I put them off till I forget and it's too late.

Participant N: Yes, especially the weekly goals.

Participant O: I feel like I have don't the back work for it, I just haven't put it on paper. With that being said, I feel as if I have begun the implementation without the paper.

Participant P: I was able to complete the Rule of Life material and implement some of it. I can't really say that I've had enough time to implement all of it.

2. How long and how has the implementation gone?

Participant A: I have kept the schedule for 1 month. Some pieces were easier to implement regularly than others.

Participant B: I have been attempting to implement the Rule of Life gradually as the process went along. With each step I would try to add it into my life.

Participant C: For the last 3 weeks—give or take a few busy days.

Participant D: It's still going partially, especially those long term items. It was difficult to not get frustrated and disappointed in myself when I failed. Because of the spiritual nature of what we were doing, I would feel worse than normal when I failed to do what I set out to do.

Participant E: Roughly two weeks [for full implementation]. It has taken real dedication. It's almost a re-wiring, reprioritizing actually, that is happening.

Participant F: I have been implementing my Rule of Life for about two weeks. My time and temple goals have been my weakest areas of implementation, while my relational and missional goals have been in line with my Rule of Life.

Participant G: I started being serious about devotion time after beginning the book. [My husband] and I have been taking Monday's off (still not weekly, but more frequently than when we weren't taking any days.) That has been a great encouragement too. I still get frustrated when things come up and it always seems like it is things we can't say no to, and the schedule fills up so fast. So I'm still working on how to make this a weekly commitment and being okay with saying no.

Participant H: 18 days

Participant I: I officially started the process of implementing what I had constructed in my chart [4 weeks ago]. I feel that my chart has served to be most helpful with my financial behaviors. A couple of days after completing my chart, I went ahead and put together an excel chart to give an overview of our personal budget. The budgets layout goes along with the commitment that I made in the ROL chart. So far, the chart has served a way to keep me accountable and structured.

Participant J: So far I would say since we started the book. I can see how each week the chapters were built on top of each other as we got further and further along. I would project about a few months.

Participant K: About a month. Most of the areas have been easily achieved.

Participant L: 4 weeks, it has gone well.

Participant M: It has been one month for the majority. I already did some of the things like devotions every morning so they have already become habit and easy to continue.

Participant N: I've been doing this for the last three weeks.

Participant O: Implementation is slow, but it is happening.

Participant P: I believe it's been a little less than a month

3. Do you feel more/less/the same attention is given to priority roles since implementation?

Participant A: I certainly feel that more attention has been given to the priority roles.

Participant B: I am certainly more aware of the priority roles in my life now. While there is not a drastic difference, this awareness and the mindset that it has helped create in me causes me to give it more attention now than I probably did before.

Participant C: I feel as though I have been able to give more attention to my priority roles without guilt, whereas before I would feel the pressure to fill many roles that were not life giving or even necessary for my ministry. Instead I have been more aware at which areas in my life I can delegate (especially at work) and which areas I must take full responsibility for.

Participant D: I would say more, but only slightly. I'm having a hard time trying to separate from those roles that I don't need and are separate from who I feel God is calling me to be.

Participant E: I've been able to put "the first things first". I've found that using the Rule of Life has helped me see where I'm wasting time on inconsequential things while not spending enough time doing the things that actually matter.

Participant F: Much more attention is being given to my primary roles. I am realizing that this process of surrender requires a great deal of faith in God and also in the people around me to pick up where I am leaving off.

Participant G: This is an area I still need to work on. Not much has changed honestly with my roles, but I haven't been intentional about making change either.

Participant H: Yes, to some degree

Participant I: As I mentioned in the previous question, this process has served as a helpful tool in my financial life. I also believe that my spiritual and devotional life has seen some recent improvements, as I'm following through with my commitment to make a gratitude list on a weekly basis. With just these two improvements being noticed, I would say that my priority roles have received more attention since I began implementation.

Participant J: Absolutely. The book highlighted areas in my life that needed attention. In a way I would say God used the book to show me what I need to work on, and I am grateful for that!

Participant K: More

Participant L: I have given it more attention

Participant M: I was more aware of the changes I wanted to make, however, did not do well with implementing them into my day to day life.

Participant N: I feel I've been more dedicated to the things that are a priority for me.

Participant O: More on some and the same on others. I'm focusing more on relationships than I have before. For the talents part, I've pretty much focused with the same attention.

Participant P: I think I have been more aware of what I put together, and that makes for more attention being placed on those specific areas of my life. I can't say that everything has been implemented perfectly, or even implemented to its entirety, but I have been aware of it which is more than from before.

4. Describe any major differences in priorities, time management, task accomplishment since implementation?

Participant A: I have been making a greater effort to get adequate sleep each night. I know how vital it will be for me to set a solid schedule now, especially as we are entering our busiest season in the corps. I have also been sticking tightly to my weekly Sabbath

day and making it a priority to rest, re-set, and replenish. Commitment to those two items has given me a clearer vision and strength for the work ahead at the corps and for my family.

Participant B: As mentioned above I think this process has helped to give me a more focused priority mindset. For me operating with my short-term and long-term priorities at the forefront naturally helps with my time management and task accomplishment.

Participant C: So far the major difference I have noticed is my ability to say no to extra items and say yes to my family. Although we are still in the midst of a busy season, I have noticed a healthier amount of time being spent with my family—and quality time. I am not as stressed or wound so tightly during our time together which enables me to actually enjoy it. This has been a BLESSING!!! I cannot believe that this is what I have been missing, and will keep with the Rule of LIFE to safeguard this precious gift.

Participant D: I haven't had any changes that I would consider major.

Participant E: Designated Bible reading time for personal development, more focus on strengthening life-giving relationships, more focus on my relationship with myself.

Participant F: [My wife] is not in charge of our family finances. I am offering to help with the kids more and forcing myself to sit at the table for dinner even when I'm tired and would rather not. We are spending more time together as a family.

Participant G: The majority of the changes I have made have been personally and spiritually (devotions, prayer, Sabbath). These things have not impacted my time management or task accomplishment really. My honest hope is that come January I can sit down and figure out how these new priorities and "rules" can be implemented and how it needs to look for me. I can put a plan in place to be successful and live by the things I say are most important.

Participant H: Sermon prep and over the last few weeks and time spent catching up with [my child] has been better. Sabbath has been hard since kettle season has started.

Participant I: Besides the priorities that I reported improvement on in my previous answers, I would also like to add that I made a calendar with [my wife]. I believe that by making this calendar (which is one of my commitments), [she] and I now have a written out deadline chart, which can only serve as a massive help for the future.

Participant J: Since I am now a 1st year officer, it actually helped me get organized and focus on the "mission" or "talent" section of the ROL. With the chart/diagram of the ROL I am able to see what I have been able to accomplish visually. That is tremendous for me because I can see my accomplishments laid out and see how I have grown. It's rewarding! By looking at that every day it helped me get organized with my planner and keep up with my tasks that I need to accomplish on a weekly basis.

Participant K: Putting together the Rule of Life helped me become more aware of my relationships, both personal and in ministry, and I've been trying to realize and lean into the spiritual authority God has given me. Over the past few weeks I've been able to intentionally relate to my staff more pastorally (rather than just dealing with employment issues) and in turn, these relationships have seemed to be less life-draining than they were before.

Participant L: I have been able to recognize people in my life that were draining me but never realized it. It has helped me develop more awareness for things.

Participant M: I am more mindful in my personal time. I was able to learn to shut my phone off. Also talked with my staff and told them that unless it is an emergency to not call when I am [on Sabbath].

Participant N: I have been more fulfilled in certain areas of my life. I have discovered that some things can and must wait. If I'm not at a certain place, I won't be at my best in other areas.

Participant O: I have not noticed any major differences at this time.

Participant P: Again, I think I have been more intentional. That's the biggest difference. I have been more intentional which means I am learning to focus more on those areas of my life. Conversations have even been had with my husband which has helped [us] to be on the same page.

5. Describe the quality of your devotional life since implementation. Any major differences?

Participant A: There is a higher quality and level of enjoyment for sure as I look forward to that dedicated time set aside.

Participant B: It is still not where I'd like it to be, but it is improving

Participant C: No major differences here just yet. I have been more disciplined in having a devotional time every day, but the quality is not much different than before. Although, I will say that I have been able to commit to memory scripture passages that have been used in my pastoral role/to speak into situations that arise within my ministry.

Participant D: Because of the increased frequency, I have felt that the length and depth of my devotional life have grown through this process.

Participant E: I've seen a great improvement in my devotional life. Rather than just studying for sermon prep I've been in God's Word for myself.

Participant F: My devotional life has remained roughly the same. I still need to be more intentional about not allowing myself to be carried off by things when I first arrive at the office; it sets the tone for my day. I need to carve out that first half hour of my time in the office for scripture reading and prayer.

Participant G: I have now been in the Word for 61 straight days. It has hurt my heart to see how easy we let our relationship with God go while trying to show others how to strengthen theirs. Seems pretty ironic. I have to be the example, and I need His Word to keep me going and filled so that I have enough to offer others.

Participant H: Not much of a difference—still fairly steady in the mornings

Participant I: As I mentioned before, my devotional life has found more structure, which has ultimately led to improvements. My perspective and outlook on life has been predominately healthy.

Participant J: I would say my devotional life has gotten stronger. It is about the same and the book has done nothing but make my connection with God stronger.

Participant K: Unfortunately, my plan to attend [a Bible study] hasn't panned out as well as I had hoped. Since it is a weekday evening class, I have run into several conflicts after my first few weeks. I still need to give more attention to this area of my life.

Participant L: No major differences in my devotional life. However, the quality of my daily priorities have been sharpened.

Participant M: I have gotten away from devotional books and am now reading through the Bible.

Participant N: I've done it almost every day since starting.

Participant O: My devotional life has unfortunately stayed the same, which is not particularly bad. However, there is so much potential for a deeper devotional life following the reading of this book. I am still working on this.

Participant P: Because I have been more intentional, I have found myself spending more time in devotion than I even thought I had...funny how that works. The time also seems to fly by and I am not so bothered even when my [child] walks in first thing in the morning.

6. Would you recommend this process for Salvation Army Officers? If so, when in their officership (i.e. Training School, 1st year, 5 year checkpoint, etc.)

Participant A: Yes, it would be best to begin in Training.

Participant B: This could be a good process to go over in Spiritual Formation Groups at the Training School, and then it would be good to revisit the material every couple years as part of the review process. A more thorough focus of this in the 5th year review could be helpful.

Participant C: Yes! Although it takes an effort, it is so important to have a focus in our ministry. The Army provides a generalized focus, but each of us is gifted differently and oriented to different parts of ministry—and that is okay. Saying yes to the right things and delegating the rest may save us from a lot of stress, burnout, overwhelmed feelings, and provide us with the opportunity to discover our true and unique identities in Christ. He needs each one of us—not the people we try to be because that's what we believe that the Army is looking for, but the people it needs.

I would recommend this process to be done at the 5 year checkpoint. In year one I was still busy trying to figure out my role as a corps officer, later a mother, etc. It would have been overwhelming to try to add another task on top of it. Plus, in year three now I have been able to see the areas of ministry in which I am more inclined toward, and which I feel the Spirit leading me deeper into. I think that kind of experience is very beneficial to this process. The 5 year checkpoint will give each officer a good base knowledge of who and where they are and help them to focus their ministry moving forward.

Participant D: I would definitely recommend this process. The problem is that I think it would be better at the five year check point but will also be better if face-to-face meetings were able to happen as well. This makes me feel like it would be better at the training school, but in many ways it would've been difficult for me to fully be able to process my role as a corps officer until I was out of the training school. I worry that too many people would have incorrect ideas of what exactly a corps officer does.

Participant E: I would recommend this process for officers in their first year, third year, and fifth year.

Participant F: I would recommend this process to be introduced and modeled in training, but re-visited about 3 years into officership through a spiritual retreat which would include reading this material prior to attending and working with another couple one on one for the duration of the retreat, and through workshops and exercises. When I was in training, I did not truly understand the volume of responsibility I would have as an officer (r father, or as a community leader). In other words, I did not have a frame of reference

for applying these ideas. By revisiting this material, a third year officer would have a much more informed perspective on applying these ideas.

Participant G: I think this would make a good class or elective in Training. It isn't as easy to implement once you're already in the craziness of life as an officer. Having these clear goals and priorities on paper and in mind up front would have been a great tool to avoid many mistakes we have already made.

Participant H: I would. I am actually sorry I have not been able to give it as much focus as it deserves. This focus on personal rules, I think is what all of us are missing.

Participant I: Absolutely, yes! I don't see the reasoning for an officer to have a certain amount of service time to implement this material. This would work great with the cadets as well.

Participant J: Well it was really helpful for me in my first year but I had nothing to compare it to. It would be cool to approach this process again in my fifth year definitely. It would be nice to see if I've turned some of my own personal Rule of Life into habits! Also, it would be cool to see what I could keep up or not keep up. This is definitely worth discussing for officers.

Participant K: I think this process could be beneficial for 1st year officers to help develop vision and goals for their ministry as they are just starting out.

Participant L: Yes, I would recommend this at the Training School, especially during the spiritual formation elective.

Participant M: This would have benefitted me more in the first year of Training right after I got settled. This is when people are putting together new routines, making it easier to implement the things you prioritize.

Participant N: Yes! I feel like it would be most helpful in the 1st year. Training may seem like the best time, but I feel like it could get lost amidst everything else. The first year is helpful because we're figuring everything out, so it can be helpful when prioritizing and discovering how to maintain a balanced life.

Participant O: I would certainly recommend this process for officers. I'm not sure what the percentage of completion would be though. This was very hard to accomplish as a new officer four months in. I mean no offense by that statement. With that being said, I think it would be a great spiritual development tool for cadets [in Training].

Participant P: I would certainly recommend this process during the Training years, maybe as a second year. And then I would even introduce it again at the 5 year mark. An initial implementation is important I think to introduce before getting into the field, but then a re-implementation I feel would be effective at the 5 year mark as so much could have changed as well as many lessons learned.

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VITA

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